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VOLUME I.

OLD ROWLEY.

BY E. BERESFORD CHANCELLOR.

THE LIVES OF THE RAKES.

VOL. I.
"OLD ROWLEY."

VOL. II.
THE RESTORATION RAKES:
BUCKINGHAM, ROCHESTER, DORSET,
SEDLEY, ETHEREDGE, WYCHERLEY.

VOL. III.
CHARTERIS AND WHARTON.

VOL. IV.
THE HELL-FIRE CLUB:
SANDWICH, DASHWOOD,
WILKES, CHURCHILL, ETC.

VOL. V.
"OLD Q" AND BARRYMORE.

VOL. VI.
THE REGENCY RAKES: THE REGENT,
HERTFORD, HANGER, ETC.

OLD ROWLEY

(KING CHARLES II.).

Frontispiece.

THE LIVES OF THE RAKES

OLD ROWLEY

(KING CHARLES II)

BY

E. BERESFORD CHANCELLOR,
M.A., F.S.A.

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FOREWORD.

IT is a remarkable thing that the lives of people who are, in certain senses, abnormal have a sort of fascination for most of us. If we call it, as we generally do, "a horrible fascination," we do not materially alter the case, but attach an implied excuse to our curiosity, or partiality, or whatever it may be, and thus tacitly convey a palliative while boldly confessing our waywardness.

We are accustomed to term anything abnormal which falls below, or rises above, the recognised standard of mediocrity. If a man does something unusual but not necessarily so unusual as to land him in the Law Courts, we say he is abnormal—especially if, after doing that something once, he makes a habit of doing it regularly. Yet if a man does anything abnormal which does *not* lead to the Courts of Justice, but to other courts as regal and more decorative, we do not necessarily call him abnormal at all, but brilliant, clever beyond words, quite a genius, and so forth.

Abnormality in kingship is not frequent in our annals. Richard II was only murdered once; James II only dropped the Great Seal in the river once; once only did James I get himself nearly blown up by gunpowder (although one remembers that Queen Anne had a passion for another sort of gunpowder); but he wrote several books, itself a sure sign of abnormality—at least in those days, if not now—it may be contended. A few of our Sovereigns have, however, been frankly abnormal: for example, Richard III made quite a habit of murder, as Henry VIII did of marriage; Ethelred was never there when he was wanted, John preferred his bed

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to his throne, and Richard I liked war better than peace. But, after all, it remained for Charles II to make a habit of being witty and immoral—both characteristics which are exceedingly suspicious ones, as all will allow.

I make, here, no plea in extenuation. I simply present the Merry Monarch and his courtiers as they were, in those ample days, with all their imperfections on their heads and all their witticisms in their mouths.

Before sending this volume to the press, I look up the word Rake in that amusing compilation *The Oxford Dictionary;* and I find that Rake (for Rakehell, which sounds so much naughtier, don't you think ?) means a " dissipated or immoral man of fashion." There should, therefore, be no excuse needed for applying the term to those who will fill the series of volumes of which this is the first. For all those treated of were certainly dissipated, certainly immoral, and as certainly men of fashion. That they possessed a special monarch seems appropriate ; that that monarch should have been Charles II is not without its advantages, so far as our national credit for *savoir vivre* is concerned. We have been said to take our pleasures sadly. Well, here is a sovereign who took *his* pleasures anything but sadly, and a group of men who also shewed in this, as in other ways, their abnormality, by taking their pleasures (and what varied ones they were !) joyously, and by an almost epic disregard of public opinion and the feelings of the seventeenth and eighteenth century equivalent for Mrs. Grundy.

E.B.C.

CONTENTS.

Chapter.		*Page.*
I.	CHARLES II: HIS CHARACTER AND HIS TIMES	1
II.	HIS YOUTH AND EARLY EXPERIENCES	20
III.	WANDERINGS IN ENGLAND	40
IV.	WANDERINGS ABROAD	64
V.	THE RESTORATION	86
VI.	HIS TITLED MISTRESSES	106
VII.	HIS TITLED MISTRESSES (CONTINUED)	126
VIII.	HIS UNTITLED MISTRESSES ..	141
IX.	HIS OTHER FAVOURITES	169
X.	OLD ROWLEY HIMSELF	200

ILLUSTRATIONS.

OLD ROWLEY	*frontispiece.*	
ELEANOR GWYNN	*to face page*	48
LADY CASTLEMAINE ..	,, ,,	88
THE DUCHESS OF PORTSMOUTH	,, ,,	118
THE DUCHESS OF MAZARINE ..	,, ,,	128
LUCY WALTERS	,, ,,	144
MARY DAVIS	,, ,,	182
THE DUCHESS OF RICHMOND ..	,, ,,	220

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

CHARLES, HIS CHARACTER AND HIS TIMES.

THOSE who discover in heredity the causes of a man's temperamental excesses in any direction, will find in the case of Charles II an excellent support for their theory. His ancestry was a mixed one, and the fact that he had not only Scotch and Danish, but also French and Italian, blood in his veins, will account to some extent for that amorous disposition for which he was, among monarchs, not perhaps the most outstanding but certainly (if we except Louis XV) the most famous. He reveals himself, indeed, as the supreme type of the Rake among Kings; the distinctive Don Juan of Royalty; the head and front of those who have loved not wisely but too well. For that characteristic, which makes an appeal to all but the rigid puritan, which has something so essentially human in it, he has been selected,

times out of number, as the exemplar. He has served as a pattern to some, as a tract to others—as both the type of one who made the most of life, and enjoyed to the full the opportunities his manners and his position gave him; and as an awful example of degradation, a sensualist and, in our modern acceptation of the term, as a lewd fellow; according to the attitude by which his character is approached and the temperaments of his admirers or detractors.

Among the former, however, have been found some unexpected figures, and no one of them more unexpected than that of the sturdy old moralist Dr. Johnson. In this instance it might be contended that the oracle of the Literary Club, the author of *Rasselas*, the inditer of those solemn objurgations in *The Rambler*, and the utterer of innumerable *obita dicta* of moral sentiment, was led away by his well-known Jacobite tendencies, and was sympathetic with the most able of the Stuarts because he represented a family which he regarded with a curious reverence. But Johnson was a moralist before everything. King was much to him, but Church was more. And yet it is he who was ready to say a good word for a sovereign whose immorality was as patent as his wit. On one occasion at a dinner at Tom Davies's, on April 5th, 1775, a discussion arose as to the inseparability of gentility and morality, and Davies himself, Hicky the printer, and Boswell, fell to

on the subject with infinite zest. In due course the great man himself intervened in the debate (as they say in the House) and, the case of Charles II having been instanced, immediately flared up; "taking fire," says Boswell, "at an attack upon that Prince for whom he had an extraordinary partiality"; and away he went: "Charles the Second was licentious in his practice; but he always had a reverence for what was good. Charles the Second knew his people, and rewarded merit. The Church was at no time better filled than in his reign. He was the best king we have had from his time till the reign of our present Majesty, except James the Second, who was a very good king, but unhappily believed that it was necessary for the salvation of his subjects that they should be Roman Catholics. . . . No, Charles the Second was not such a man as George the Second. He did not destroy his father's will. He took money, indeed, from France; but he did not betray those over whom he ruled; he did not let the French fleet pass ours."

Now for an historical student to express such opinions as these proves better than anything what a complete ascendancy the memory of Charles (with all his imperfections on his head) had gained over the mind of so moral a man as Johnson, so that he slurred over what many have called that king's immoderate licentiousness, and gave voice to expressions which would seem fitter

in the mouth of an "Old Q." than in that of the *Censor Morum* of the age.

The fact is that the judgment of men is largely biassed by their environment. We read with horror of the life and habits of a Caligula and a Domitian; we regard the doings and sayings of the eighteenth century with wonder, used as we are to less robust methods of expression and less full-blooded modes of daily life. So when we study the private life (which was so very public) of a man like Charles II, we are apt to judge his doings as we should if he put them in practice in our own more discreet (I will not say more moral) days. Johnson was under no such illusion. He knew the times of the sovereign for whom he had such a partiality; he knew the temptations to which such a monarch (in common with most monarchs) was exposed; he knew, above all, human nature; with the result that he condoned the "licentious practices" of Charles because of something in that sovereign's character which appealed to the rigid moralist within him.

Although the principle of two wrongs not making a right is a sound and logical one, at the same time the proverb that one man may steal a horse and another may not open the stable door, is as true. And in the matter of morality I doubt whether Charles II was much worse than most kings. From earliest days, and in all countries, mistresses have been an almost re-

cognised adjunct to a royal household. The fact is easily explainable. The ordinary man can marry how and when and whom he likes. Natural affection enters into such alliances; mutual love cements them. But, until recent days, the case of royal personages, heirs to the throne particularly, was quite different. Questions of state, the demands of international policy, and a restriction in the power of choice of a suitable consort, resulted in those *mariages de convenance* which when they occur among less exalted persons generally produce disaster, but which in the case of royal personages too often bear the initial stigma of an immoral union, that is to say a union unsanctified by mutual affection. The inevitable thereupon occurs. In some cases the desires of monarchs are shrouded by a more or less discreet veil—although to be sure the fierce light that beats upon every throne illuminates most things; in others, a sort of cynical disregard for public opinion is responsible for a publicity about such matters highly reprehensible to a nation in which the cardinal sin is—being found out.

In the days of Charles II an extraordinary licence in behaviour, as in conversation, was rampant. It was a throw-back from the unnatural restraint placed on human nature by the Puritan *régime*; a restraint that controlled the outward exhibition of natural feelings but could not alter them—merely, indeed, acting as a temporary

deadening of such ebullitions by affording, in their place, the excitement not of licence but of self-mortification.

Charles returned as King to a country tired to death of hypocrisy, bored to extinction by the negation of all the joys and merriment of existence. His people acclaimed him as their true sovereign come, at long last, to his own, through a period of tribulation and exile. He himself, doubtless, felt that he deserved some compensation for all the unhappy experiences he had undergone ; and if, therefore, with the peals of jubilation still ringing in his ears and the cries of a joyful land still echoing through his capital, he passed the first night of his return from exile in a less discreet *milieu* than that of his palace, only the very rigid moralist will, I think, be found to blame him.

We get an insight into some of those temptations to which many kings are subject but to which Charles was peculiarly exposed, and against which his temperament could hardly be expected to make a successful stand, in a passage from the memoirs of Sir John Reresby, once Governor of York, a man of probity who could nevertheless allow for much because he was a student of human nature and recognised the tendencies of the period.

" The Court at Whitehall soon became very magnificent," he writes, " the Duke of York having his Court apart, and the Duke of Gloucester his. The Kingdom was now very rich, and men

were generally satisfied with the King's Return, tho' some Malcontents of several sorts there were ; and how should it be otherwise ? But the King did not much adhere to Business : all was calm and easy, he had a Parliament ready to yield to any thing that was reasonable, as the Acts they made sufficiently declare, and the Earl of Clarendon, then Chancellor, was at the Helm. The King, who was at an Age and Vigor for it, pursued his Pleasures ; and if Love prevailed with him more than any other Passion, he had this for Excuse, besides that his Complection was of an amorous Sort, the women seemed to be the Aggressors ; and I have since heard the King say, That they would sometimes offer themselves to his Embraces : Nor were the two Dukes, his Brothers, more averse to the Sex than his Majesty."

A delightful writer of our own day, to whom paradox is as the breath of Heaven and who through its wild perplexities has so often given us glimpses of blinding truths, once said that " The problem of Charles II consists in this, that he has scarcely a moral virtue to his name, and yet he attracts us morally. We feel that some of the virtues have been dropped out in the lists made by all the saints and sages, and that Charles II was pre-eminently successful in these wild and unmentionable virtues " ; and even Thackeray, allowing that Charles was a rascal, emphatically

denied that he was a snob and affirmed that, unlike George IV, he was a gentleman. It is in the combination of these two verdicts that we must perhaps look for that appeal which the character of the monarch made to the sturdy old Tory of George III's reign.

The fact is there were two distinct men in Charles II. One of these was given up to ease and dissipation to an inordinate degree. His passion for women and an indolent epicurean existence was the result of hereditary temperament, and of a career which had hitherto kept him physically as well as mentally on the stretch. He had been a wanderer from his youth, he had seldom tasted the joys of independence and little of the advantages that are popularly supposed to surround royalty. After such a novitiate it was hardly to be wondered at that coming at last into his own he should have determined to enjoy himself to the full and above all to act in such a way as not to be exposed to another exile or the worse fate which his father had undergone. He saw too around him on his return to England many of those fawning on him who had been instrumental in pulling down kingship ; he heard the cries of joy from many of the same throats as had a dozen years before given vent to shouts of execration against his father. Was it to be wondered at that he should have become a cynic, as dubious of the value of popular applause or

popular vituperation as was the great Duke of Wellington himself? It was only the natural mildness of his disposition that caused him to be so lenient to many of his father's detractors and to act with far more impartiality than did a Czar at a later date. For when Alexander II was murdered his son tore up the Constitution which lay prepared in the dead sovereign's desk, in an almost natural access of fury against his father's assassins—forgetting that by the punishment of a section of his subjects he was depriving thousands of the innocent of freedom.

Charles II had nothing of this character. He was simply an amiable, dissipated, exceedingly witty, very far-seeing monarch, who thought (wrongly enough, no doubt) that anything was worth while so that an easy existence could be secured. As the French traveller Misson remarked: "He was a good prince, a man of wit, curious in Physical and Mechanical experiments, a pensioner of France, a Roman Catholic, if anything. Sick of being tost from pillar to post, he was resolved to spend the latter part of his life in peace: fonder of women, ease and pleasure than of Dunkirk, England, and all the crowns of the universe."

We might smile at that conception of sovereignty which enabled a foreigner to say of Charles II that he was a good prince, remembering as we do the degradation to which England was

subjected during his reign. But Misson was probably not a political student, acute observer as he shows himself to be in other directions, and besides he was a Frenchman and so could bear with philosophy incidents which made the blood of a Briton boil and his cheek blush. In any case, too, he probably attributed such crimes as the sale of Dunkirk and similar unpatriotic acts to Charles's ministers rather than to Charles himself. Indeed that was the general contemporary opinion, Lord Clarendon's newly built palace in Piccadilly being nicknamed by the mob "Dunkirk House," an implication supported by the King himself when he made his famous retort to Rochester's no less famous epigram: "My words are my own; but my deeds are my ministers."

With the Restoration a new England was inaugurated. The Rebellion had brought in its train novel conceptions which the reign of Puritanism was to confirm; but the greatest novelty was the later conversion of the Court from the centre of dignity and formality it had been under Charles I into something not remotely resembling a Turkish seraglio. The divinity that hedged the earlier Stuarts (for even James I had acquired a kind of esoteric effulgence if not from dignity at least from pedantry) was swept away on that merry May-day when Charles II came home to his own people. There was to be under his rule no more of the mystery with which most

monarchs since the days of the decadence of Rome have hidden their vices and while enjoying the immunities of ordinary mortals have succeeded in passing for something super-mortal. There were no blinds down at Whitehall in those spacious days. Indeed so cynical was the disregard of public opinion that one can think of no better illustration of the way in which reputations, or want of reputations, were exposed than by that typically analogous incident when Mr. Secretary Pepys, passing through the palace precincts, saw Lady Castlemaine's smocks hanging out to dry and, like Goethe at the sight of the golden weather-cock at Frankfort, was filled with a pleasant feeling.

But Pepys, though he knew how to sympathise with the royal predilections, saw the un-wisdom of the publicity given them, and he cannot but reprehend his master's "following his pleasures more than with good advice he would do; at least to be seen to all the world to do so . . . . his dalliance with my Lady Castlemaine being public, every day, to his great reproach; and his favouring of none at Court so much as those that are the confidants of his pleasure, as Sir H. Bennet and Sir Charles Berkeley." Elsewhere the diarist tells us how "the King do doat upon Mrs. Stewart only, and that to the leaving of all business in the world, and to the open slighting of the Queen; that he values not who sees him, or stands by him while he dallies with her openly and then privately

in her chamber below, where the very sentreys observe him going in and out; and that so commonly that the Duke (of York), or any of the nobles when they would ask where the King is, they will ordinarily say, 'Is the King above or below?'"

The publicity of Charles's doings within the precincts of the palace was matched by his behaviour abroad; in Hyde Park, where he appeared in "a perriwig" and Lady Castlemaine "in yellow satin and a pinner"; at the play, where they whispered to each other out of adjoining boxes until the fair one left hers and went into that of the King, where she seated herself *coram publico* between him and the Duke of York, which put even the easy-going monarch out of countenance.

The disregard of public opinion exhibited by the King was not long in communicating itself to the Court, and Lady Castlemaine carried it to such lengths as to appear driving in the Park, lying "impudently," Pepys puts it, "on her back in her coach asleep, with her mouth open." Other things far more impudent were done by the cynical pleasure-seekers who devoured the wealth of the nation and behaved more intolerantly than the monarch himself, who at least gave away liberally what he received and was far less extravagant than the parasites who surrounded him.

Few things show more clearly the openness with which immorality was carried on at Court

than the fact that the grave and sober Evelyn can record the publication "amongst other libertine libels" of "A Bold Petition of the Poor Whores to Lady Castlemaine," whom they obviously regarded as the head of their profession.

On a certain occasion Charles II was addressed by a local magnate as "the father of his people," at which Lord Rochester murmured "of a good many of them." The wit of the rejoinder consisted in the substratum of truth which it adumbrated. For besides the offspring of the King whom he ennobled, such as the Dukes of Monmouth and St. Albans and Grafton, there were innumerable results from his connection with those successive *maitresses en titre*, and other less outstanding ladies whose names are to be found in De Grammont's memoirs and other scandalous chronicles of the time. The most notable of these were the four famous (infamous would be a better word) duchesses: Cleveland (formerly Lady Castlemaine), Portsmouth, Mazarine, and Richmond; Eleanor Lady Byron, and the unnobled courtesans Lucy Walters, Eleanor Gwynn, Mary Davis and Winifred Wells. Besides these there were other favourites of the Court whose smiles and favours seem to have been distributed among the royal and noble *habitués* of Whitehall and whom we shall meet with later on in these pages.

It is generally supposed that Charles II was wholly given up to the embraces of his mistresses

or the boon companionship of idle and dissolute favourites. But this is an error. It is quite true that he too often gave up to these what was meant for mankind, but he had another side to his character, and if he loved his ease and enjoyed a sort of thoughtless sauntering through life, he could on occasion—and the occasions were not so rare as is often supposed—give his mind to more serious subjects. One does not know if, like the famous Mrs. Battle, he *unbent* himself over a book, probably he was no reader—men and especially women were his books—but it is recorded how he would assist at dissections (I shall have occasion to tell of one of these incidents of a very curious character), how he loved scientific investigations and attended the meetings of the Royal Society; how he would discuss the architecture of St. Paul's with Wren and deeper matters with Burnet and Evelyn and Hobbes. His character has been drawn by such various observers as Clarendon and Halifax and Buckingham, Evelyn and Temple, Burnet and Dryden and North. The result of their combined judgments shews us a man of very considerable parts but with not sufficient character to support them; a man of a kindly, humane disposition but with so sceptical an outlook on life that he came to regard everyone with what in a soured man would have been suspicion but which in him was merely an easy-going credulity

concerning any man's rectitude and any woman's honour.

On one occasion his ability and his shortcomings were exhibited to his very face by a privileged wit, and it was Tom Killigrew who in Cowley's presence once held up the mirror to the King: "There is," he said, "a good honest able man that I could name, whom if your Majesty would employ and command to see things well executed, all things would soon be mended, and this is one Charles Stuart who now spends his time in employing his life about the Court and hath no other employment; but if you would give him this employment he were the fittest man in the world to perform it."

The fact that this outspoken critic lost no favour through the utterance of such a home truth, and the fact that his master did not "profit by any of this, but lays all aside and remembers nothing, but to his pleasures again," as Pepys recording the incident remarks—shews us the secret which made Charles II one of the best loved and worst Kings we have had. He would spend hours toying with his mistresses, hours among his retorts and receivers in his laboratory; he would talk to serious men like Evelyn and would enjoy the humours of *Hudibras* (which at one time he was accustomed to carry about in his pocket); he would propose a subject for Dryden's pen, and Crowne's *Sir Courtley Nice* was due to his sugges-

tion. He loved and understood the theatre and would give decisions on most points or adjust the differences between the players with the acumen and judgment of an impresario; he would enter into converse with one philosopher, Hobbes, and would enjoy a stroll with another, Evelyn; he had a passion for music and would be seen (as Steele once remembered seeing him) leaning on Tom D'Urfey's shoulder familiarly humming an air with him. Like all the Stuarts he had a turn for poetry and once composed a characteristically amorous song which Walpole, who calls him the only genius of the family, curiously overlooked when compiling his *Royal and Noble Authors*. Fishing he enjoyed, and his interest in the wildfowl in St. James's Park is proverbial; he could tell a story well, as is proved by the clear and succinct account of his wanderings which he dictated to Pepys, although he was, like other good story-tellers before and since, apt to repeat himself, as one of his courtiers has recorded. He was felicitous in his witticisms (as we shall see), and if his anecdotes were too often of a profane and indecent character he might have excused himself (no valid excuse, certainly) by pointing to the habits of his period, above all of his court, and as being willing to follow bad examples rather than set good ones.

He was in short an exceedingly cultivated and naturally able man; indeed, the Lord Keeper

Guildford went so far as repeatedly to affirm that he understood foreign affairs better than all his council and counsellors put together. But some wicked fairy godmother had stultified the good gifts showered on him by preventing his knowing how to use them, and indeed making him actively averse from using them, so that he, who had the power of doing so much, was content to fritter away his time under the domination of that terrible query *cui bono?* He was too indolent even to be angry—and he had many causes for being so; too kind-hearted to be cruel, as so many sensualists have been; too much a sceptic to mind much what happened; too much an epicurean to trouble about anything except the joys of the passing hour and his own soft and equable existence. What makes Charles II dear to many who reprehend his vices, who stand aghast at his conception of a sovereign's duty, who are irritated at the sight of ability disregarded and made of no account, is that while above all caring about his own personal ease and enjoyment he cared about that of those around him. He was very human, very humane; tears could draw anything from him, and no story is extant of his shewing cruelty, while many prove that he was extraordinarily long-suffering and amazingly forgiving. One can no more imagine his acting as James II acted to the Duke of Monmouth than one can imagine James being capable of saying his witty things.

On his death-bed Charles begged that they should not let " poor Nelly " starve. His behaviour under tremendous provocation to other of his mistresses proved his innate kindliness, his hatred of causing pain, his essential gentleness of disposition.

That women were regarded at his Court as fair game for the most audacious and the most enterprising was not a little due to the women themselves. Many of them came there to attract the eye of a king who was known to be susceptible in the highest degree; some were set on by politicians for the furtherance of their aims, and the rapacious Louise de Keroualle who became Duchess of Portsmouth was in this way an instrument in the hands of the king's own sister, Henrietta, Duchesse d'Orleans, who, at the instigation of Louis XIV (her brother-in-law), brought the fascinating lady over in her suite when she came from France to negotiate the Treaty of Dover. Some were attracted by the glamour of a court where Pleasure reigned supreme and where good looks or a witty tongue was a sure means of attaining fortune, where if any woman did preserve her virtue she was regarded as an anomalous creature compounded of prudery and Puritanism.

The Court of Charles II was thus such a hotbed of vice as had not its parallel under any other British sovereign, and to match it one has to go to the succeeding century in France when Louis

the Well-Beloved reigned over a society equally profligate and equally cynical. But there was this difference between the two centres of licentious freedom: whereas Louis XV was a selfish sensualist with hardly a redeeming feature to illuminate the dreary monotony of his vices, Charles was a brilliantly witty monarch with capabilities far above the average, with a sort of passionate delight in various fields of mental activity, but who through a concatenation of circumstances had seen so much falseness, had endured so much contumely, had been exposed to so many of the shafts and arrows of wayward fortune, that when he reached the harbour of refuge which the Crown afforded, he determined to repay himself in pleasure what he had acquired through pain. That he never became a hardened cynic, that he preserved his good humour and equable temper through so many adverse circumstances, should be placed to his credit as affording if not an excuse for gifts mis-handled or neglected, at least something in extenuation for many faults and shortcomings.

CHAPTER II.

HIS YOUTH AND EARLY EXPERIENCES.

ALTHOUGH the object of this book is not to set forth in detail the career of Charles II either as Prince and King, or as Exile and Wanderer, it will not be amiss, as tending towards a proper conception of his character as a rake among monarchs, to say something about his career before the joy-bells of the Restoration heralded his return to the throne of his fathers.

Charles I and Henrietta Maria of France, daughter of Henri Quatre—the "*vert galant*"—and of Marie de Medicis, the daughter of Francis of Tuscany, had been married for five years and had already had a son also named Charles, who died in infancy, when Charles was born on May 29th, 1630, at one o'clock in the afternoon. Those who are interested in portents and omens will be glad to know that the heavens duly fulfilled on this occasion their destiny of blazing forth the birth of princes, and even the sober Rushworth

records the appearance of a star—a star which the reverend Fuller specifically states to have been Venus, a specially appropriate planet to usher into the world one who was to be so ardent and perpetual a devotee at the shrine of that goddess. Lilly, the great astrologer of the day, in noting the circumstance is less fulsome than Fuller, whose expressions are only to be understood on the grounds that he looked for royal preferment. Dryden and Waller competed in perpetuating the event, the former doing so in later years when in his *Annus Mirabilis* he introduced the lines:

> ". . . . That bright companion of the sun
> Whose glorious aspect sealed our new-born King."

Poems too came showering in from Oxford; but Cambridge, that home of the Muses and Mathematics, was strangely silent.

Charles was but two days old and, according to Lord Dorchester, "already visible, as a gracious pledge from Heaven of those blessings which are conveyed and assured to Kingdoms in the issue of their Princes," when the King of France (Louis XIII) and the Queen Mother (Marie de Medicis) were invited to join with the King of Bohemia as sponsors at his christening. That event took place at St. James's Palace on June 27th, 1630, and in the Books of Ceremonial* may be found the elaborate arrangements laid down for the ceremony, which had been drawn up on the previous

* Preserved in the College of Arms.

May 24th in anticipation of the event. In a letter from Samuel Meddus to Joseph Mede an account of the ceremony is given, from which we learn that the Prince had a Welsh nurse, as became a Prince of Wales, and that the presents given included from the Duchess of Richmond (one of the proxies) a jewel valued at between seven and eight thousand pounds.

An anecdote has survived of Charles's childhood, and is thus given by a contemporary :

" When he was but very young he had a strange and unaccountable fondness for a wooden billet, without which in his arms he would never go abroad nor lie down in his bed ; from which the more observing sort of people gathered that when he came to years of maturity either oppressors and blockheads would be his greatest favourites, or else that when he came to reign he would either be like Jupiter's log for everybody to deride and contemn, or that he would choose to command his people with a club than rule them with a sword."

The fact that this deduction was made in a book published after Charles's death makes one a little sceptical of the conclusions drawn from an incident common enough to many children. Like many children, too, the boy had a dislike to taking medicine, and the circumstance, on one occasion, resulted in his mother, Queen Henrietta Maria, writing him one of her rare letters in English,

which is therefore worth transcribing* :—

"Charles j am sore that I most begin my first letter with chiding you because j heere that you will not take phisike. I hope it was onlie for this day and that to morrowe you will doe it, for yf you will not j most come to you, and make you take it, for it is for youre healthe. I have given order to my lord Newcastelle to send mi worde to night whether you will or not, therefore j hope you will not give mi the paines to goe and so j rest

Your affectionate mother
Henriette Marie, R.

To my deare
Sone the Prince."

An amusing commentary on this letter is provided in another from the Prince himself to Lord Newcastle, in which he tells that nobleman that "I would not have you take too much Phisick: for it doth allwaies make me worse, and I think it will doe the like with you."† This waggish reference to the Queen's admonition is a clear proof of Charles's humorous disposition even at his then tender age of eight. The Earl of Newcastle had been given charge of the Prince on June 4th, 1638, and in the instructions concerning his governorship it is expressly stated that no "lewd or suspected person shall presume

* Harleian MS. 6988, Art. 54.
† *Ibid.*

to haunt near the abode where at the time the Prince may happen to be."

Lord Newcastle continued his care for three years, and then, on August 10th, 1641, that duty was transferred to the Marquis of Hertford, to whom similar strict injunctions were given. Later, the Earl of Berkshire, a weak and not very wise person, continued the duties of governorship till 1644. These three noblemen, none of whom seems to have been specially appropriate for such a charge, were official custodians. Under them were less exalted individuals whose duty it was to initiate the Prince in various directions. Thus Brian Duppa, successively Bishop of Chichester and Salisbury, a man of an amiable temperament but, according to Burnet, not fitted for the post, instructed him in theology and cognate subjects; the famous Hobbes, for whom he always preserved a regard, taught him mathematics; and John Hampden, it is said, was also proposed as a tutor—possibly in constitutional history—an appointment that did not materialise! It is interesting to speculate what might have occurred to alter the history of the country had that single-minded patriot secured the post. Charles I might never have lost his head, and Charles II might never have become an exile.

The Prince had only reached the age of twelve when the Civil trouble came to a head by the King raising his standard at Nottingham on August 22nd,

1642. Two months later the battle of Edgehill was fought (October 23rd), and the boy saw the fight from an eminence close by. As the Earl of Lindsay passed by on his way to the conflict in which he was destined to lose his life, he caught sight of the Prince and exclaimed, "There is a child born to end that war which we now begin," words which after-events were to invest almost with the spirit of prophecy. With Charles was his young brother, the Duke of York, then aged nine, and they were both under the care of Dr. Harvey, the celebrated physician, famous as having discovered the circulation of the blood just fourteen years earlier. It is reported by Aubrey that Harvey during the engagement pulled a book out of his pocket and became so immersed in it that he forgot what tremendous happenings were taking place before him, and only realised them when a cannon ball fell close to him and his royal charges, causing the little party to change their position with what speed they could.

During the earlier part of the Civil War, Prince Charles remained with the King, either on his various marches or at Oxford, whither the seat of government and the royal headquarters had been transferred after the battle of Edgehill. Subsequently, however, he was sent into the West and, young as he was, was given the position of head of an association for petitioning or compelling the Parliament to make peace. This

sending away of the Prince was due to the fear the King entertained of being made prisoner, when, as he told Clarendon, it was absolutely necessary for him to separate himself from his son in case the enemy should become masters of both their persons, with the additional reason that should he (the King) fall into their hands whilst his son was at liberty, they would not dare to do him harm. A vain hope, as subsequent events proved.

It was on March 4th, 1644, a wet and miserable day, that Prince Charles left Oxford for the western counties armed with his new dignity and fortified on account of his youth (he was but fourteen) with an advisory council. He was told that if sorely pressed by the Parliamentary troops he was immediately to make his escape abroad. He was soon forced to follow these instructions, for Fairfax with his victorious soldiers swept the western counties, and overrunning Devonshire and Cornwall caused the Prince to fly with all expedition to the Scilly Isles (he left Pendennis on March 2nd, 1646) with a view to passing over to France, where his mother had already taken shelter. On the news of the Prince's flight, the Parliament wrote inviting him to return to England, to reside in some spot which they would select. They doubtless hoped by getting him into their power to be able to make terms with the King, but they do not seem to have desired

to injure him personally in any way. To this invitation the Prince replied from "our Court in the Isle of Scilly," April 15th, 1646, by a letter in which the following passage occurs: "We have a great and earnest desire to be amongst you, if we might have any assurance that it might prove an expedient towards a blessed peace, and the composure of these miserable distractions."

Nothing came of these negotiations, and after a six weeks' stay in Scilly the Prince passed over to Jersey. He does not seem to have stayed in the latter island long, and his proceeding to France was the subject of much dissension in his little Council, some members of which looked with the gravest apprehension not only on the Prince placing himself in the power of a foreign country but also on his being under the immediate control of the Queen, whose actions and advice had been so unfortunate in the case of the King. However, to France Charles proceeded, taking up his residence in Paris with his mother who, according to Clarendon, seems to have ruled him and his affairs with a rod of iron, the monthly allowance assigned him by the French Court being annexed by her and so much of it distributed to him as she thought fit; "nor was the prince," we are told, "ever master of ten pistoles to dispose as he desired." Indeed his very clothes and other necessaries were allotted him according to his mother's judgment, "her majesty desiring to have

it thought that the prince lived entirely upon her, and that it would not consist with the dignity of a prince of Wales to be a pensioner to the King of France." In after years Charles himself, as we all know, did not think it inconsistent with the dignity of a King of England to assume such a dependent position.

On his arrival in Paris there was no little excitement in the French Court as to how he should be received, what exact etiquette should be used, what precedence he should be given. Paris indeed was anything but a bed of roses for the young Prince, to whom precedence did not probably matter nearly so much as the lack of ready money. He must have begun to learn philosophy then, and he had need of it, for again we are told that " it can hardly be believed with how little respect they treated him during the whole time of his stay there." No wonder his sojourn at the French Court was of short duration, although a more cogent reason than a desire to be independent actuated his next step. Following on the vote of " No more addresses to the King," a portion of the Fleet revolted from the Parliament, an act which voiced the feelings of a large section of the country. Sympathetic movements also began in various parts of England and particularly in Scotland, where the army under the command of the Duke of Hamilton promised hope to the King of a deliverance at its hands.

The Prince went to the Hague, probably as being more accessible to the Fleet which he may have been told to look upon as a hope of success. Nothing, however, came of it, and all he could do, and did do, as a last effort to save his father's life was to send a *carte blanche* to the Parliament. This document is among the Harleian MSS. and consists of a blank sheet of paper at the foot of which is the Prince's signature and seal. The boy of eighteen was ready to fulfil any conditions that might be the means of preserving his father's life, and when one recalls subsequent acts redounding to his credit neither as a man nor a king it is pleasant to remember this act of filial affection. It had, as we know, no result, but if Charles I was aware of it, it must have done something to soften the last tragic moments of his life.

With the adoption of the Commonwealth the exiled Prince's career enters on another phase—one of waiting, of making the best of bad fortune, of extracting from life what it had to give in the way of anodyne. But his stay at the Hague was not destined to be a long one. He was now nineteen, and as a political personage to be reckoned with. The Scots, too, had immediately on his father's execution proclaimed him King, an act hedged about with certain vexatious restrictions and not improbably due more to a dislike of a section of the English Independents than to any special motives of loyalty or personal

regard. They did certainly invite him to Scotland, and were lavish enough in protesting their affection and in promising support to his claims.

Such a circumstance made the Dutch not unnaturally uneasy, and fearing embroilment with the new government in England, they discreetly hinted to Charles that his room was preferred to his company. He left the Hague* on June 15th, 1649, accompanied by his sister and her husband the Prince of Orange. At Rotterdam he was nobly received, "salvoes being fired and bells ringing and with other signs of joy and Honour, though the English Company there durst not give any particular proof thereof." † In Breda the same ceremonies awaited him and at Antwerp he was "met and entertained with all possible state and presented with a most rich and splendid Chariot with eight horses suitable." ‡ There he met his old tutor, the Earl of Newcastle, who had taken up his residence in the city. When he arrived in Brussels he was so "royally ordered" that he afterwards confessed it was "the most sumptuous magnificency and pleasing variety he ever met with." Heath, who gives us these details, also states that the Prince's aunt, the Duchess of Savoy, made him an allowance of 50,000 crowns a year, a considerable sum, but one

* At Windsor there is a famous picture by Cornelius Janssens shewing Charles and the Princess Palatine dancing in the midst of a large assembly.

† Heath's *Chronicle*.

‡ *Ibid.*

which Charles with his then large following was to find inadequate for his requirements.

In due course he arrived again in Paris. But here his presence appears to have given as much uneasiness as it did at the Hague, and not unnaturally, considering that the English Parliament was then on terms of amity with the French nation. It was therefore decided that Charles should return to Jersey as being the only portion of his dominions which at that time acknowledged his sovereignty. There he arrived in September, 1649, attended by a rather heterogeneous " court " of three hundred people and having just that number of pistoles to pay for the journey. But, as if the fugitive was never to have rest, news arrived of the preparation by the Parliament of a powerful fleet destined to bring the island to obedience to the Commonwealth, and the unlucky prince had perforce to renew his travels. After being nearly shipwrecked, he landed in France once more, but hurrying through its inhospitable regions he reached the Breda of his former acquaintance.

At this juncture the Scotch Commissioners arrived with an invitation to the Prince to go to that country. He had already been proclaimed King of Scotland by the Parliament of that nation, and although the terms placed before him were hard and drastic, consisting of the conditions that he should give satisfaction for the security

of the Protestant form of religion, the confirmation of the Union of the two kingdoms and the good and peace of Scotland itself according to the Covenant, there seemed nothing to be done but to accept them. Neither Charles nor his counsellors could abide the Covenanters, whom they regarded as specially inimical to the late king; nor did they love the Scotch nation, which had sided with the English Parliament, had delivered Charles I into its power, and had generally behaved in a dour and calculating way little pleasing to those whose ideas and sentiments were so opposite in every particular. It was a bitter pill to swallow, even when gilded by the restored trappings of royalty. But needs must when necessity drives, and Charles accepted the terms, and on June 16th, 1650, arrived in Scotland, the famous Admiral Van Tromp (of whose prowess he was to have a later experience) accompanying him as far as the Firth of Cromarty, and, according to Heath, shedding tears on taking leave of him.

One can hardly imagine a greater antithesis than that which existed between the character of Charles and those with whom he was now brought into contact. The Prince's fervid temperament had been further developed by the companionship of the young Duke of Buckingham, whose dissoluteness excelled that of his famous father and whose love of pleasure over-rode many natural abilities and finally closed his career in

" the worst inn's worst room," to use Pope's well-known words. " He was," says Burnet, " wholly turned to mirth and pleasure : he had the art of turning persons and things into ridicule beyond any man of the age : he possessed the young king with very ill principles both as to morality and religion." He it was, against the advice of the rest of Charles's *entourage*, who persuaded his master to enter into the engagement with the Scots ; and if one can gauge his character he did so not from any particular motive of policy (of which, to tell the truth, he had little idea) but from a desire for a change and an opportunity of exerting his gifts of satire and ridicule at the expense of the strait-laced, hard Covenanters.

In return for having proclaimed him king of their country and received him when he was discarded by the English and found but temporary asylums on the Continent, the Scots made Charles pay dearly. Burnet draws a terrible picture of the young and ardent king in leading-strings to his real masters. The hypocrisy of some of their principal men may be realised when it is known that notwithstanding their professions of morality and strictness they connived at the " dissolute course of life which was excessive scandalous " of the Duke of Buckingham, because he advised the king to place himself wholly in their hands. " The king," says Burnet, " wrought himself into as grave a deportment as he could : he heard

many prayers and sermons, some of a great length. I remember in one fast day there were six sermons preached without intermission. I was there myself and not a little weary of so tedious a service." If the pious bishop found these religious exercises wearisome, what must have been the feelings of a young man of twenty, with a companion at his side urging him on to every kind of dissipation! It sounds like Mephistopheles accompanying Faust to church and inciting him to "hear sermons" as a means of political salvation. Nor had Charles much more freedom outside the sacred edifice. He was not permitted even to walk abroad on the Sabbath; and when the Covenanters were informed of any gaiety such as dancing or card-playing at his little court, they were down on him with the long-faced admonitions of church elders. His subsequent aversion from all strictness in religion dated no doubt from those Scottish days when he was forced to listen to discourses of inordinate length and frequency and when attempts were made daily to kill in him all the natural ebullience of youthful temperament.

Besides this religious *régime* Charles was exposed to all sorts of miseries and privations. His every word and act was "set in a note-book, conned and learned by rote," and Lord Lorne, the eldest son of the Marquis of Argyle, was placed about him as a spy on everything he did. So many were the indignities to which he was exposed that

once he attempted to fly from his dreary environment, only to be intercepted and forcibly persuaded to return to fresh ones, an attempt known as "The Start"—a start which had no finish. They did crown him at Scone on January 1st, 1651, with something approaching magnificence, but it is characteristic that the published *Form and Order of the Coronation of Charles II King of Scotland*, consists, as "Imprinted by James Brown at Aberdene," of a sheet and a half of ceremonial and thirty-five pages of a sermon preached on the occasion by Master Robert Dowglas, Minister at Edinburgh!

This Dowglas enters into a story which has survived, concerning the King's doings in the Scottish capital. Hume thus records it: "The King's passion for the fair could not altogether be restrained. He had once been observed using some familiarities with a young woman, and a committee of ministers was appointed to reprove him for a behaviour so unbecoming a covenanted monarch. The spokesman of the committee, one Dowglas, began with a severe aspect, informed the King that great scandal had been given to the godly, enlarged on the heinous nature of sin, and concluded with exhorting his Majesty whenever he was disposed to amuse himself to be more careful for the future in shutting the windows. This delicacy so unusual to the place and to the character of the man was remarked by the King,

and he never forgot the obligation." Another story confirms Charles's dominating passion although no Dowglas figures in it with philosophical advice. It tells how, although the centre of observation by men of piety and virtue, the young King could not forbear the satisfaction of his youthful inclinations, "insomuch that having in the year 1650, to the many fornications and adulteries which he then committed, added the perpetration of an attempt upon a modest and virtuous lady, he had incurred the general dissatisfaction of his best friends." The close of this passage indicates its *provenance*, and without specific details may perhaps be regarded as slightly exaggerated. One cannot but think that it was not always Charles who was the aggressor in love, and many fair daughters of Edinburgh were doubtless ready enough to be regarded as the victims of a monarch's lawless passion.

But such dalliance was to be cut short by big events. Although Charles had been proclaimed King in Ireland by Lord Ormonde and had originally projected going there, that country was over-mastered by Cromwell and was therefore no fit asylum for him. Indeed, it was in Scotland that his first trial of strength with the Commonwealth was destined to take place. He, however, was not fated to be present at the Battle of Dunbar; for having on previous visits to the Scotch camp made himself popular with the army, the jealousy

of the Covenanters was aroused and his desire to accompany the troops in their efforts against Cromwell's Ironsides was frustrated. The defeat of what had been a fine army badly captained caused a change in these feelings, and Charles was at length permitted to place himself at the head of the troops. He formed the desperate design of penetrating into the heart of England. Like his great-nephew, in 1745, he hoped to collect recruits to his standard as he marched southward and thus to be in a position to deal a decisive blow at his antagonists. He was accompanied by the veteran David Lindsay, who by no means shared his master's optimism and whose gloomy countenance was little to the liking of a young man anxious to fortify his own hopes by those of others. On one occasion the King asked Lindsay why he was so gloomy, to which the latter replied that gallant as the army looked he knew it well and was certain it would not fight. He probably, too, took into consideration the fame and military prowess of Cromwell and his Ironsides who had swept all before them at Dunbar on the 3rd of September in the previous year.

It is a curious coincidence that it was on the same day just a year later that Cromwell fell upon Charles and his army and routed them so completely that in the opinion of most of those who realised the magnitude of the disaster all hopes of the King ever coming to his own were over

and done for. During the four hours that the battle lasted Charles himself showed that he possessed physical courage in a very marked degree. He headed the first charge of the Royalists, whose onslaught was so furious that even Cromwell's veterans were forced temporarily to give way ; he had two horses shot under him, and after proving himself both cool and daring was one of the last to leave the field of his desperate exploit. Had the Scotch troops backed him up (Leslie with 3,000 cavalry remained practically passive for some unaccountable reason) the fortunes of the day might have been different and the Restoration anticipated by a score of years.

It is, however, idle speculating on the might-have-beens of history: the actual result of concrete facts alone concerns us. The effect of them on Charles himself was disastrous, for while many of his followers who were taken prisoners were treated well, a price was put on his own head, and on the following 10th of September a proclamation described him as " Charles Stuart son to the late tyrant " and commanded his instant arrest so that he might " be proceeded with and ordered as justice shall require." One may suppose the idea of justice held by the Commonwealth to have been of that drastic kind in which the terms " judge " and " accuser " were synonymous. Charles realised this, and although in the fight at Worcester he was prepared to lay down

his life in his own cause, after that fight was over he took steps to escape what would in all probability have been a death on the scaffold. Retiring in the first instance into the city of Worcester, he still tried to rally his disorganised forces, but the place soon became full of enemy troops and headlong escape was obviously his only chance of preservation. With a handful of followers he fled from the city and began those wanderings which read more like romance than sober history.

CHAPTER III.

WANDERINGS IN ENGLAND.

IN the concluding lines of Tennyson's *Talking Oak* we have a little vignette of that passage in the wanderings of Charles II after the Battle of Worcester, which has caught on to the popular imagination and has given a name-day to the calendar:

> "And more than England honours that,
> Thy famous brother oak,
> Wherein the younger Charles abode
> Till all the paths were dim,
> And far below the Roundhead rode
> And hummed a surly hymn."

By one of those singular anomalies which occasionally crop up in the annals of our country, the observance of Oak Apple Day (if any observance of it still remains in a matter-of-fact generation) takes place not in September, the month in which the friendly full-packed leaves sheltered the fugitive, but on May 29th, which was at once the anniversary of Charles's birth and the day on which he was restored to a jubilant

people. In consequence cases have been known of those more versed in natural than in political and social history wondering how an oak so early in the year was full-leaved enough to conceal the nation's hope among its branches. But although this event is the most outstanding and picturesque of those adventures which attended Charles after his defeat at the Battle of Worcester, a variety of circumstances occurred before he sought shelter in the most typical of national trees.

There have been several accounts of his flight and concealment, that of Blount, written, according to Anthony à Wood, "with great truth and fidelity," being the best known. But a more interesting relation is that which Charles himself, then being at Newmarket, dictated to Pepys on October 3rd and October 5th, 1680.* Dumas, or in our own day Mr. Stanley Weyman, never penned a more romantic or thrilling story of adventure than that of which Charles as a fugitive was the hero and which he in after years related with such obvious truth and simplicity.

We know from other sources how valiantly he behaved at Worcester and how amid desertions and discouragement he did everything a man could to rally his forces and to inspire fresh hope

* The original manuscript is in the Pepysian Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge. It was first printed with a preface by Sir David Dalrymple in 1766, and (privately) by Edmund Goldsmid in his *Bibliotheca Curiosa*, 1883.

in his routed following. Nothing was of any avail, and (I quote his own words) "after the battle was so absolutely lost as to be beyond hope of recovery, I began to think of the best way of saving myself." His first idea was to get to London before the news of the defeat should reach the capital. It was already getting dark and the council that took place with his more immediate followers, chief of whom was Wilmot afterwards Earl of Rochester, resulted in much conflicting advice. "I found them mightily distracted," says the King. The idea of reaching Scotland seemed out of the question, but none of his *entourage* except Wilmot agreed with his suggestion to make for London, for the very good reason that Charles did not impart his design to anyone else. Realising that if he kept with a number of beaten and disheartened followers he would have less chance of escape than if he selected a handful and went off with them, he "strove as soon as it was dark to get from them," and he adds characteristically, "though I could not get them to stand by me against the enemy I could not get rid of them now I had a mind to it."

The journey to London was abandoned, and with the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Lauderdale, Lord Derby, Wilmot, and several others, Tom Blague and Duke Darcey among them, the King made for the north, taking the road to Kidderminster. The party consisted of about sixty

altogether and it found no little difficulty in evading both the remnants of the Royalist force which were trying to reach their native land and the bands of Roundheads infesting the neighbourhood of Worcester. At length getting clear of disheartened friends and lynx-eyed enemies the little band reached Kinver Heath. Here, however, they were brought to a standstill through their guide mistaking the way. Charles was by this time worn out by fatigue and anxiety, and it was evident that rest was imperative. At this juncture Lord Derby suggested going to a house owned by a staunch royalist, Mr. Cotton, where he had himself sought and obtained shelter some time before. It was therefore determined to make for this place, which was none other than the now famous Boscobel House. The first halt, however, was at White Ladies, the residence of one of the party, Mr. Charles Gifford.* Here they arrived with the dawn and were enabled to get some rest and refreshment.

A contemporary print shows White Ladies (it took its name from having been a Cistercian nunnery) to have been about half a mile from Boscobel. Here they had no sooner arrived than they were told that a troop of three thousand Royalist horse, under David Leslie, "all in disorder," on their way back to Scotland, were

* According to Charles, "White Ladies was a private house that Mr. Gifford told me belonged to honest people that lived thereabouts"—namely the Penderells.

close by at Tong Castle. Charles was urged by some of his followers to join them, but he replied that men who had deserted him when they were in good order would never stand by him when they were beaten, and he absolutely refused to put himself in their power again. His knowledge of human nature stood him in good stead, and to his preference for entrusting his life and fortunes to the honest native family which now came to his assistance rather than to his late army may be largely ascribed his really miraculous deliverance.

The members of the Penderell family who now enter on the scene as protagonists consisted of five brothers.* Of these Richard, who lived at a neighbouring house called Hobbal Grange, is the most prominent in the succeeding phases of Charles's adventures. He was the first to arrive on the scene indeed, and was at once sent to get one of his own suits of clothes in which to disguise the King. Having taken off his military dress Charles put on that brought by Richard, consisting of "a pair of ordinary grey cloth breeches, a leather doublet, and a green jerkin," which seem to have been really William Penderell's as he and the King were of a size; an old coarse shirt which Charles also wore belonged to one Yates, according to Father Huddlestone.

* According to Father Huddlestone's recollection as imparted to Pepys there were six brothers in all: William, who lived at Boscobel; John, at White Ladies; Richard, known as "Trusty Richard"; Humphrey, a miller; George; and another whose name is not given.

The King's hair was also cut, raggedly at first with a knife by Wilmot but trimmed into shape by Richard Penderell with a pair of shears. This rough and ready metamorphosis having been effected, the rest of the party, with the exception of Wilmot, who was conducted afterwards by another of the Penderells to a house close by belonging to a Mr. Whitgrave, left their master and went to join Leslie and his three thousand; but, comments Charles, "as I did before believe, they were not reached six miles after they had got to them but they were all routed by a single troop of horse, which shows that my opinion was not wrong in not sticking to men who had run away."

Meanwhile the King, with a wood bill in his hand the better to support his new character as a servant, was led out of White Ladies by Richard Penderell and concealed in a wood called Spring Coppice, which lay immediately behind the house, what time two of the other brothers, Humphrey and George, acted as scouts in the vicinity. During the whole of the day following the battle, a rainy, miserable day it is said to have been, Charles remained in this exposed situation, wrapped only in a blanket with which Richard had provided him. The King in his relation says that while he was in the wood he was "without meat or drink," but according to another account one Frances Yates, a sister-in-law of Richard Penderell and

wife I imagine of the owner of the coarse shirt which Charles was wearing, appeared with a meal of eggs, butter, bread, and milk. It is said that seeing a woman in the secret of his disguise the King said to her: "Good woman, can you be faithful to a distressed cavalier?" and that she replied, "Yes, Sir, I will rather die than discover you." Without for a moment reflecting on Mrs. Yates's appearance, one somehow cannot imagine her as specially attractive, for had she been so it is probable that even in his then perilous position the King would have had something more than this to say to a fair member of the sex.

While in the wood Charles discussed with Richard Penderell the possibility of getting safely to London, but the result was not encouraging, and thinking over the matter he changed his plans and resolved on another way of making his escape: "which was to get over the Severn into Wales, and so to get either to Swansea or some other of the sea-towns that I knew had commerce with France." That night he passed at Hobbal Grange, where old Mrs. Penderell was delighted to give him shelter. His disguise was improved and he assumed the name of William Jones. At nine o'clock that night he set out with Richard with the intention of getting to the house of one Woolf whom Penderell knew and who it was thought would be ready to afford a temporary asylum for the fugitive. The name of the house

was Madeley, and it was only about five miles from White Ladies.

They had not got more than two miles on their way before, having to cross a small stream, they came to a mill. Their alarm can be imagined when a voice cried, "Who goes there?" Richard, however, promptly answered "Neighbours going home." But the voice, which belonged to surely the most irascible of millers, thundered, "If you be neighbours stand or I'll knock you down." There was nothing for it but to take to their heels, which they did with the more celerity as they heard men come out of the mill and thought they might be enemy soldiers. They ran as hard and as far as they could up a lane, and then leapt a hedge and lay panting. In this position they remained half an hour until, no sign of pursuit appearing, they pressed on to Mr. Woolf's house. Wanting to make sure of the kind of reception he was likely to receive, Charles remained under a hedge by a great tree and told Richard to go forward and ask for shelter for "a person of quality." Woolf on receiving this message said that it was dangerous to harbour anybody that was known, and that he refused to do so, "unless it were the King himself." Whereupon Richard made a clean breast of it, and Woolf replied "that he would be ready to venture all he had in the world to secure the King." A somewhat cryptic answer, which appears to have troubled

Charles not a little, but as there seemed no remedy he resolved to take the risk and at once went forward.

The King need have been under no apprehension as Mr. Woolf, an old gentleman whose son was already a prisoner of the Roundheads, received him with all possible kindness and respect. He said, however, that the Parliamentary troops were in the neighbourhood watching every spot and examining everybody; that he dared not put Charles in one of the priests' hiding holes in his house because they were already known to the enemy; but that the best plan would be for him to go into the barn and conceal himself among the straw and hay. There, then, Charles and his companion remained all night and all the next day, and having discussed the project of making for the Severn with their host and being persuaded that it was too dangerous to attempt, they left the shelter of Mr. Woolf's barn about eleven o'clock at night and returned in their tracks to White Ladies—giving the mill a wide berth by wading through the stream close by.

It was about five o'clock the next morning that they again reached the woods between White Ladies and Boscobel, the King remaining concealed in them while Richard Penderell went forward to ascertain whether any of the Parliamentary troops were about. They learnt that Wilmot, who had intended going to London, was

San.l Cooper pinx.

Rich.d Purdom sculp.t

ELEANOR GWYNNE

Priefs and Miſtreſs of Charles 2.nd Ob.1687.

from a beautiful Miniature by S. Cooper.

London *Publiſhed by* S. Woodburn 1816.

actually at Mr. Whitgrave's house near Wolverhampton, but that Major Careless of the Royal army was concealed in the neighbourhood. To him Charles at once sent, and they had breakfast together in John Penderell's cottage. Roundhead troops were still scouring the vicinity, so after some consultation it was decided that the King and Careless should take some food with them and conceal themselves in the thickest oak tree they could find. Among the branches of what became known as The Royal Oak—a tree standing at about an equal distance from White Ladies and Boscobel House—Charles thus passed the third day of his flight. From his hiding place among the branches he could see the Roundheads riding about the wood, and on one occasion they approached so near that he could actually hear them talking. One of the Penderells had in the meanwhile been sent to Mr. Whitgrave's (the King in error speaks of him as Pitchcroft) to learn if Lord Wilmot was still there. This being found to be the case, and also that there was a secure hiding-place in the house, Charles and Richard Penderell went there that night, finding Mr. Whitgrave, his grandmother and Father Huddlestone. At least this is Charles' own account. In other narratives the fourth day is said to have been spent at Boscobel House itself, where the King is described as sitting close to the door of a priests' hiding-place, ready to secrete himself on the first

sign of alarm, although he once ventured into an arbour in the garden. This priests' hole, a component part of most Roman Catholic houses in those days, was a tiny place about five feet square, constructed between two main walls and with two means of escape, one through a bedroom and the other into the garden. Here the King rested that night, but before doing so he had a talk with Humphrey Penderell, who had during the day been examined by the Roundheads at Shifnal, whither he had gone to pay certain taxes. It seems that Charles's visit to White Ladies had become known and that Humphrey had been hard put to it in his interrogation. A reward of £1,000 was offered for the King's apprehension, and the penalty for hiding or abetting him in his escape was death; but neither rewards nor threats had the least effect on the loyal and trusty Penderell family. Even one less directly associated with the royal fugitive proved friendly and disinterested, for the owner of a sheep which Careless killed and which Charles helped to dismember (a sort of anticipatory experience of his subsequent excursions into vivisection!) for their meal, refused to receive anything in compensation on discovering that it had been sacrificed for a cavalier, probably with a shrewd surmise as to whom that cavalier might be.

Having learnt that Lord Wilmot was at Moseley, about five miles from Boscobel, the King

expressed a great desire to see and talk with him. To this end at nightfall he started off, with the Penderells as a bodyguard, mounted on an old mill-horse. There was some trouble about finding Wilmot, who, having been advised of the King's coming, had waited in a field selected as a safe meeting place. Time went on and no King appeared, so Wilmot withdrew into the house, imagining that something untoward had occurred to prevent his master keeping the appointment. Shortly after, Mr. Whitgrave, the owner of Moseley, appeared at the priests' hole where Wilmot was concealed and informed him that the party had arrived. Presently Whitgrave was sent for to the Royal presence and was then first made aware of the King's identity, Wilmot saying, "This gentleman under disguise whom I have hitherto concealed is both your master and mine and the master of us all, to whom we all owe our duty and allegiance." Mr. Whitgrave afterwards wrote an account of his first meeting with Charles and in it he tells how, after having given him his hand to kiss and said some tactful things about his character for loyalty, the King enquired where the hiding place of which Wilmot had told him was situated. It being shown him, he went in and remarked that it was the best place he was ever in. "Then he returning to his chamber, sitting down by the fireside, we pulled off his shoes and stockings and washed his feet, which

were most sadly galled, and then pulled off likewise his apparel and shirt, which was of burden cloth, and put him on one of Mr. Huddlestone's and other apparel of ours. Then, after he had refreshed himself a little by eating some biscuits and drinking a glass of wine, he grew very cheerful and said, "If it would please God to send him once more an army of ten thousand good and loyal soldiers and subjects, he feared not to expel all those rogues forth from his Kingdom.' Then, after an hour's discourse or more, he was desirous of reposing himself on a bed that night."*

Charles's sojourn at Moseley, short as it was, was not to pass without event, for on the second morning after he had arrived there a troop of Roundheads rode up to the house. He saw them from a window over the porch from which he had been watching and at once retired to his hiding place. However, Mr. Whitgrave seems to have satisfied them that no search would be productive, and they left without even going upstairs.

In the meanwhile Wilmot had gone off to the house of Colonel Lane, about five or six miles away, to consult with that gentleman as to the best means of getting Charles towards London. Apparently this course, which kept recurring to the King's mind, was again regarded as too hazardous. But as Lane had a sister who was just then about to set out to visit a cousin, Mrs. Norton, near

* Whitgrave's narrative.

Bristol, it was arranged that the King should accompany her as her servant and thus reach a seaport whence he might be able to get away from England. Accordingly the next night he went to Colonel Lane's, where he changed into a serving-man's clothes, and on the following day he set out for Bristol, riding with Miss Lane behind him on a pillion.

Some adventures befell the travellers on their journey. For instance, the horse cast a shoe after they had been about two hours on the road, and they were forced to stop at the first village they came to to get another. The King tells how, when holding his horse's leg while it was being shod, he asked the blacksmith what news there was, to which the smith replied that, " he had not heard if *the rogue*, Charles Stuart, was taken," whereupon Charles told him that if he were he deserved to be hanged more than all the rest, for bringing in the Scots—one of those subtle witticisms which the King always had at command even from his early years. Some distance further on they came in sight of a party of Parliamentarians who were resting by the wayside, but they risked everything and rode on, luckily without being challenged. That night they stopped at a house at Longmarston, where the King as a servant was of course obliged to remain in the kitchen. During the evening the cook told him to wind up the jack, which he did so

awkwardly that the woman exclaimed, "What countryman are you that you know not how to wind up a jack?" to which Charles replied, "I am a poor tenant's son of Colonel Lane in Staffordshire; we seldom have roast meat, but when we have we don't use a jack."

At Cirencester, which was reached the next day, the party put up at the Crown Inn, and on the following evening came to Mr. Norton's house at Abbotsleigh. Here Charles was recognised by Pope the butler. The King shall tell the story himself:—

"Pope and I went into the hall, and just as we came into it Mrs. Norton was coming by through it, upon which I, plucking off my hat and standing with my hat in my hand as she passed by, that Pope looked very earnestly in my face, but I took no notice of it, but put on my hat again and went away, walking out of the house into the field. I had not been out half an hour, but coming back I went to the chamber where I lay, and just as I came thither Mr. Lassells came to me, and in a little trouble said, 'What shall we do? I am afraid Pope* knows you, for he says very positively to me that it is you, but I have denied it'; upon which I presently, without more ado, asked him whether he was a very honest man or no? Whereto he answering me that he knew him to be so

* "Pope had been a servant to Tom Jermyn, a groom of the Bedchamber, when I was a boy at Richmond"—Charles's own words.

honest a fellow that he durst trust him with his life, I thought it better to trust him than go away leaving that suspicion upon him, and therefore sent for Pope and told him that I was very glad to meet him there and would trust him with my life as an old acquaintance ; upon which, being a discreet fellow, he asked me what I intended to do, " For," says he, " I am extremely happy I know you, for otherwise you might run great danger in this house, for though my master and mistress are good people, yet there are at this time one or two in it that are very great rogues, and I think I can be useful to you in anything you will command me."

On this Charles told him he wanted to get a ship at Bristol and also that Lord Wilmot intended coming to join him at the house. Pope immediately showed the danger of this latter suggestion, as Wilmot would certainly have been recognised, and he therefore went off and arranged for him only to come at night, letting him in by a back door. It was then suggested that Wilmot should go forward to the house of Colonel Francis Wyndham at Trent to see if the King could safely seek an asylum there, what time Pope set off for Bristol in the hope of securing a ship for Charles's passage to France.

Pope's attempt to find a ship proved futile, however, no vessel being outward bound for the French coast within a month. Colonel Wyndham,

on the other hand, was quite ready to receive the fugitive, and it was therefore arranged that he should go there at once. Unfortunately an obstacle arose which might have made it difficult for Miss Lane, with whom Charles was still to continue in the guise of a servant, to leave the Nortons' house. This was no less an event than Mrs. Norton's miscarriage of a dead-born child, and it was only by means of a fictitious letter purporting to come from Miss Lane's own home with the news that her father was dangerously ill, that a valid excuse could be made for her suddenly leaving her cousin in her then precarious condition. Miss Lane carried out the little deception admirably and on the following morning set out, with the King riding before her, for Colonel Wyndham's residence. It took two days to reach it, the intervening night being passed at Castle Cary. On their arrival Miss Lane and Mr. Lascelles, who was with them, were conducted by the Colonel into the house, while Charles, in his character of servant, was introduced into the domestic quarters. As a matter of fact certain of the servants had been let into the secret, and as all were royalists to the backbone the King was able to be appropriately lodged in old Lady Wyndham's apartment, which had the additional advantage of being close to a small secret hiding-place in which, in the event of a sudden raid on the house, Charles could have

securely concealed himself. Happily, however, there was no necessity for this, and the King remained safely during several days, for the first time amid surroundings which gave no immediate cause for alarm.

The question now arose as to his future plans, as in order to escape out of England it was obviously necessary to take others into the secret in the matter of securing a ship. Among those whom Colonel Wyndham could rely on was Colonel Giles Strangways. Unluckily Strangways had not only been absent from those parts for a considerable time and so was out of touch with the coast people, but he was known as an ardent loyalist, so that any action on his part would have been sure to create suspicion. He, however, was so far helpful in that he was able to send the King three hundred broad pieces which, says Charles, "he knew were necessary for me in the condition I was now in." There was, thus, nothing for it but that Wyndham should himself go to Lyme, the nearest seaport, and see what he could arrange. Having broached the matter to a merchant, to whom he was obliged to confess who was to be conveyed overseas, he was successful in hiring a vessel and appointing a day for the attempt. While Wyndham was away on his errand Charles heard bells ringing and saw some bonfires blazing in the neighbourhood. Asking the cause, he was told they were rejoicing at the

death of Charles Stuart, to which his only remark was "Alas! poor people!"

Wyndham was at last successful in securing a vessel, on which it was arranged that the King should embark at Charmouth on September 22nd, and thither he went with Lord Wilmot, Colonel Wyndham, a Miss Coningsby and Wyndham's servant, Peter. But he was doomed to disappointment. No sign of the vessel which Limbry (the name of the master) had arranged to have ready, was to be seen; and treachery being feared, the whole party, having remained a night in suspense, went off to Bridport. A certain Captain Ellesdon, of Lyme, had been instrumental in arranging the matter with Limbry, and therefore Wilmot hurried away to him to find out the cause of the *contretemps*. He told Wilmot a terrifying tale. It appeared that Limbry, who had said nothing to his wife about his sudden voyage, was unable satisfactorily to account for his preparations, and the lady's suspicions being aroused, particularly because on that very day a reward of one thousand pounds had been offered in the neighbourhood for Charles's apprehension, she swore she would give information of her husband's project should he attempt to carry it into execution. As nothing would move him, however, she took the opportunity of his being in his room to lock him in, and thus effectually prevented his keeping the appointment.

Not even when concealed in the Boscobel oak with the soldiers riding beneath it was Charles's situation more perilous than at this moment. Lyme was full of savage enemies; Bridport was found to be swarming with Parliamentary troops. As, however, Charles had promised to meet Wilmot at the latter place nothing would deter him from going there. "So," says he, "we rode directly into the best inn of the place and found the yard very full of soldiers. I alighted, and taking the horses thought it the best way to go blundering in among them and lead them through the middle of the soldiers into the stable, which I did, and they were very angry with me for my rudeness. As soon as I came into the stable I took the bridles off the horses and called the hostler to me, to help me and to give the horses some oats. And as the hostler was helping me to feed the horses, 'Sure, sir,' says the hostler, 'I know your face?' which was no very pleasant question for me." However, Charles's ready wit helped him out of a difficult situation, and he was able to satisfy the man that he had seen him as a servant in Exeter, where the hostler was born.

Having got in touch with Lord Wilmot, it was decided that Charles should go to a little village called Broad Windsor; not, however, before, but for a concurrence of lucky circumstances, he had nearly been apprehended through the officiousness and observation of a blacksmith

who imparted his suspicions to one Westley, a weaver. The latter went off to the landlady of the inn where the King had been and accosted the astonished woman with the words: "Why, how now, you are a maid of honour now." "What mean you by that?" she replied. "Why," he retorted, "Charles Stuart lay last night at your house and kissed you at his departure, so that now you can't but be a maid of honour." Upon this the woman became very angry, "But," she added, "if I thought it was the King, as you say it was, I would think the better of my lips all the days of my life, and so get you out of my house or else I'll get those shall kick you out." But the weaver was not to be prevented from his attempt to gain a reward and finally so persuaded a certain Captain Macy of the truth of his suspicions that the latter at once sent off troops to Dorchester, whither it was imagined the fugitive had gone.

At Broad Windsor, where the King really was, his night was sleepless, and well it might have been, for he had hardly gone to his room in the inn than the place was filled with a troop of soldiers who were to billet there. However, he remained undiscovered and on the following day (September 24th) he got back safely to Colonel Wyndham's house at Trent. I say safely, but his position was really still extremely precarious. All the countryside was agog with rumours;

the King's journey had been by now traced to the county in which he found himself; all suspected houses were visited and thoroughly searched, and among them that of Sir Hugh Wyndham, uncle of Colonel Wyndham, where it is said the troops "seized on a lovely young lady, saying she was the King disguised in woman's apparel, nor would they let her go till by some rude experiments they discovered her sex." Even Colonel Wyndham's own house was reported to be concealing some of the fugitives from Worcester. Things began to look black indeed. Another ship was actually secured, however, at Southampton, but again Fate intervened in the shape of an order to impress it for the transporting of troops to Jersey, and Charles was once more held up.

Better fortune attended the King's efforts to secure a vessel on the Sussex shore, and through the aid of Colonel Gunter,* a staunch loyalist residing at Chichester, one was at last procured. To reach it Charles went to the house of Mrs. Hyde at Hele, a few miles out of Salisbury, whither he rode with Miss Coningsby and Colonel Robert Philips. Mrs. Hyde was so delighted at having the King as her guest that at dinner she

* Or Gounter. The Colonel has left an account of this part of Charles's wanderings, which was found in an old bureau, and sold in 1832 to the British Museum. It is now among the *Additional MSS.*, No. 9008.

had great difficulty in refraining from treating him *en prince.*

On the following day he went to Stonehenge, having said farewell openly to his hostess, but after remaining for the day among the stones he returned that night secretly and stayed in hiding in the house for four or five days longer. On October 13th he finally left Hele in the company of Dr. Henchman, one of Mrs. Hyde's guests, and at Clarendon Park Corner met Colonel Gunter and his brother, who were awaiting him. Thence they reached Hambledon, in Hampshire, where they stayed the night at the house of Mr. Symons, Gunter's brother-in-law. The bluff host, misled by Charles's discreet manner and close-cropped hair, thought he was, as he expressed it, " some round-headed rogue's son." On the following day the little party arrived at Brighthelmstone (now Brighton), where they put up at an inn afterwards known as the King Charles's Head. There one Mansel, who had been employed to find a vessel, and Tattersal the captain of it, both recognised the King, and so did Smith, the landlord of the inn. " As Charles was standing alone after supper by the fireside, Smith came up to him, and seeing no one in the room took his hand and kissed it, saying, "God bless you, wheresoever you go. I do not doubt, before I die, but to be a lord, and my wife a lady," at which Charles laughed, and fearing further discourse went into another room.

It was about four o'clock in the morning of October 15th that the King got into the vessel, which, the tide being low, was lying high and dry. The master of it followed him, and falling on his knees vowed to risk all he possessed to set him safely in France. Three hours later they set sail, and the next morning came in sight of land, disembarking at Fécamp on October 16th. The party then proceeded to Rouen, whence a messenger was despatched to the Court at Paris with the glad tidings of Charles's successful escape. At Rouen they put up at an inn in the Fish Market, but so ill-dressed was the King that before he left it his room was searched in case he might have carried away anything! The following day, after having bought fresh clothes in Rouen, he set out for Paris in a hired coach, being met outside the city by his mother, the Dukes of York and Orleans, and a large cavalcade, and was thus escorted amid rejoicings into the capital. He had been wandering for forty-three days, and about the same number of his subjects had been cognisant of his identity, yet no fear of punishment or hope of reward had caused one of them (and many were poor and humble) to be false to the trust which a King had put in them.

CHAPTER IV.

WANDERINGS ABROAD.

AS may well be imagined, after the vicissitudes he had undergone and the dangers he had passed, Charles was happy enough simply to enjoy life in what was then as now the gayest and brightest city of pleasure in the world. Of his existence during the three years he remained in France little information has come down to us. We know that on the day after his arrival he received a number of visits from royal and illustrious personages who came to offer him their congratulations and no doubt to hear at first hand the story of his extraordinary experiences. The Duc d'Orleans, his uncle, and his cousin Mademoiselle, were among the first to do this, while the Duc de Beaufort, the Duc de Guise, and Maréchal Turenne, together with most of the peers and nobles of France, offered him in due course their felicitations.

A suite of apartments was allotted to him in the Louvre and a household suitable to his station was given him. Indeed the members of the French Court vied with each other in showing their admiration for that personal courage which Charles had so markedly displayed in the midst of ill-fortune. For whatever may be the feelings which his subsequent conduct gave rise to in the breasts of the unco' guid, few will deny that under the most adverse circumstances, and in the most trying and even terrifying positions, he acted with all the valour of his race, and with a philosophy that was all his own.

Unfortunately, there were two circumstances which tended gradually to alter this position of affairs; one was political, the other personal. As regards the former, it must be remembered that notwithstanding the close relationship between the King of France and the English Royal Family, the French Government was using the most servile means to obtain the friendship of Cromwell, an object it eventually succeeded in, with the result that Charles and his brother, James, Duke of York, were forced later to leave the country as a condition of Cromwell's goodwill. The personal side of the matter was chiefly monetary, for although at first the French Court had appeared generous enough this gradually cooled off, and the moment came when the rightful King of England had, to use Clarendon's words,

not sufficient credit to borrow twenty pistoles. Clarendon, indeed, tells a sorry story of meanness in which Henrietta Maria plays a not very creditable part. After relating how, although the King was in the direst straits, a horde of courtiers around him were continually besieging him to bestow, in lieu of present favours which they realised he was unable to grant, reversions to various posts and emoluments, he goes on to describe a state of affairs that sounds strange enough :—

"The insupportable necessities of the King," he writes, "were now grown so notorious, that the French Court was compelled to take notice of them; and thereupon, with some dry compliment for the smallness of the Assignation in respect of the ill condition of their affairs, which indeed were not in any good posture, they settled an Assignation of six thousand livres* by the month upon the King, payable out of such a *gabel*, which, being to begin six months after the King came thither, found too great a debt contracted to be easily satisfied out of such a monthly receipt, though it had been punctually complied with, which it never was." Clarendon then goes on to recount how the Queen, on his Majesty's arrival, had declared "that she was not able to bear the charge of the King's diet, but that he must pay one half of the expense of her table,"

* Now called "francs."

and that "the very first night's supper which the King ate with the Queen began the account, and a moiety thereof was charged to the King."

The Chancellor has a good deal more to say on this not very savoury topic of regal economy, and allowing, if need be, for some exaggeration, it seems fairly clear that Charles was made to pay for his food and that of his attendants exactly as if he had been at an inn. Clarendon, who was at Antwerp at the time of his master's arrival in Paris, went thither to visit him, although efforts were made to prevent this meeting, and he learned the details of what he has set down from Charles's own lips, together with an account of those wanderings of which a later version was given to Pepys and which have been summarised in the previous chapter.

About this time an attempt was made, largely on the initiative of Lord Jermyn, to persuade the King to appear at one of the services of the community of Charenton, whose form of worship was mainly Presbyterian; and even Henrietta Maria, devout Roman as she was, was not averse from the step as being likely to aid her son towards his securing the throne; but Clarendon with weighty arguments combated the proposal, and Charles himself having no wish to do the thing, the matter dropped on his exclaiming: "I will never go to Charenton," although poor Clarendon

had to bear the whole onus of the refusal, as being a known enemy to the sect.

An important visitor to the King about this time was Lieutenant-General Middleton, who had been taken prisoner at Worcester and lodged in the Tower, but who had managed to escape. He was anxious to engage Charles in an expedition into Scotland. The matter, as foreseen by Clarendon, who was unwillingly made a party to the negotiations, came to nothing, but it is significant that Middleton and his friends made it one of their conditions that the Queen Mother, the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Jermyn, and Lord Wilmot should not be informed of the affair, as they felt, especially in the case of Henrietta Maria, that their plans if known would be sooner or later revealed by her, and would then be almost certain to reach enemy ears.

There is no intention in these pages to enter into the political aspect of Charles's career, although here and there it was so mixed up with his personal history as to be almost inseparable. So far as the annals of his three years' stay at the French Court are concerned they appear to have been uneventful, although we hear of Charles trying to act as mediator between Louis XIII and those of his nobles whom he had irritated to fury by his subservience to the all-powerful Cardinal Mazarin. It was probably in consequence of this attitude that the English Court at the Louvre became so

unpopular that many of its members considered themselves to be in personal danger and for many days remained within the precincts of the palace, until a safer asylum was found for them at St. Germains, whither they withdrew by night guarded by a troop of horse which had been placed at their disposal by the French King.

It was during his stay in France that certain projects were set on foot for the marriage of Charles; and Mademoiselle d'Orleans, daughter of the Duc d'Orleans, a very rich princess, having, it is said, £60,000 a year, besides owning the Duchy of Montpensier, was mentioned as a likely bride; certainly the lady herself seems not to have been averse from such a match. But the political situation was against it, and nothing came of the proposal.

Although Charles was now at an age when, with such a temperament as his, it might be supposed that his relations with the fair sex were anything but platonic, yet there is a dearth of information as to whether it was in Paris that he began those intrigues which later caused Pepys to remark of Lady Byron that she was the King's seventeenth mistress during his sojourn on the Continent. It seems almost certain that it was so, but a discreet veil has been drawn over this period of his career, and the chroniclers are chiefly concerned with his interference in French politics and the relative penury of which he was the victim.

However, he did receive a visit from one lady of a very different character from those with whom his name was to be subsequently associated. This was none other than the Miss Lane who had played so important a part in his escape from his enemies in England. She arrived in Paris accompanied by her brother Colonel Lane, in the December of 1651, having herself deemed it prudent to journey to Yarmouth in disguise and to leave England with the greatest secrecy. On coming to Paris she was received with every honour, Charles and his mother, with the Dukes of York and Gloucester, going out of the city to meet her. When he caught sight of her the King is said to have rushed forward and, clasping her hands, to have exclaimed: "Welcome, my life!" The following letter, which he had addressed to her about three weeks after his own arrival in the French capital, has been preserved and is printed in Seward's *Anecdotes*:—

"Mistress Lane,

I have hitherto deferred writing to you, in hope to be able to send you somewhat else besides a letter; and I believe it troubles me more that I cannot do it than it does you, though I do not take you to be in a good condition long to expect it. The truth is my necessities are greater than can be imagined, but I am promised they shall be shortly supplied: if they are you shall be sure to receive a share, for it is impossible I can ever

forget the great debt I owe you, which I hope I shall live to pay in a degree that is worthy of me. In the mean time, I am sure all who love me will be very kind to you, else I shall never think them so to

Your most affectionate friend

Charles R."

As we shall see later, Charles was as good as his word when he was in a position to reward her fidelity and that of the others who had risked so much for his sake. In the meanwhile Miss Lane was treated as a heroine in France, and the French Court vied with the English exiles in doing honour to her during her stay in Paris.

There is another circumstance which, according to Burnet, occurred before Charles himself left France. I give it in the Bishop's own words: "Before King Charles left Paris he changed his religion, but by whose persuasion is not yet known: only Cardinal de Retz* was in the secret, and Lord Aubigny had a great hand in it. It was kept a great secret. Chancellor Hyde had some suspicion of it, but would never suffer himself to believe it quite." One cannot but suppose that Henrietta Maria had something to do with her son's conversion to her own faith, while a remark made by James II to Burnet at a later period might well be applied to Charles's own feelings

* See a curious conversation between Charles and the Cardinal on this subject and that of the King's applying to the Pope for assistance, in Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, Book XIV.

on the subject. "King James told me," writes Burnet, "that among other prejudices he had at the Protestant religion this was one, that both his brother and himself, being in many companies in Paris *incognito* where they met many Protestants, he found they were all alienated from them and were great admirers of Cromwell: so he believed they were all rebels in their hearts."

During this time the negotiations between Mazarin and Cromwell were going on, and as the latter made the *rapprochement* desired by the French conditional on that nation no longer harbouring Charles and his brother, means were found to force them to leave the country, Mazarin (in Burnet's words) thinking it "more honourable that the French King should send them away of his own accord than that it should be done pursuant to an article with Cromwell." Money was given them and they were loaded with promises never meant to be kept; and so the exiled King began another stage of his wanderings.

His first objective was Spa, whither he went because it was the residence of his sister, the Princess of Orange, that sprightly young lady whose name has become connected with those of the second Duke of Buckingham and Henry Jermyn, and who at the period of Charles's visit had successfully overcome whatever sorrow she may have felt at the loss of her husband, some four years previously. Gallantry was a family

characteristic of the Stuarts of that generation, and the Princess added to her reputation in this respect a readiness of wit which she had in common, though in a less degree, with her brother Charles. In her congenial society the King remained two or three months, waiting for that turn of events which was so long in coming. Whatever his conduct may have been during his sojourn at Spa, one feels sure that he had no very rigid censor in his sister, whose temperament was in many respects so akin to his own. It was while there that he received a considerable present of money from the Emperor and the Imperial College* (who also enacted that no scandalous book published against him should be bought or sold in Germany under pain of death), which was, doubtless, one of the reasons influencing him in going to Cologne, where he arrived on October 6th, accompanied by the Princess of Orange. Here he had a splendid reception accorded him, of which the details are given in a contemporary letter quoted by Thurloe. He was also treated with a kindness to which he had long been a stranger, but at the same time his means were so limited (he had but an allowance of six hundred pistoles a month) that he could not even afford to keep a coach. According to one authority† his conduct during the two years he was in Cologne was of an

* Eglesfield.
† Echard.

exemplary character; but if it was his policy (as it undoubtedly was) outwardly to assume virtues which were not inherent in him, he appears in private to have sought pleasure and ensued it with the same ardour as he exhibited at any time of his life. One cannot but smile, therefore, at this picture of the good young man which might have been written below one of Hogarth's prints of the Industrious Apprentice or have formed part of a tract in the manner of the Early Victorians.

"He now," we are told, "betook himself with great cheerfulness to compose his mind to his fortune, and, with singular satisfaction, prescribed so many hours in the day to his retirement in his closet, which he employed in reading and studying the French and Italian authors; and at other times walked much upon the walls of the town, and sometimes rode in the fields; and on the whole he spent his time both to his real benefit and his public reputation." It is an edifying picture. But knowing something of Charles's predilections one fears the author doth protest over-much. What, one wonders, were those French and Italian authors? Rather one imagines the vivacious tales of Boccaccio and Brantome than the ponderous volumes of the learned De Thou or the erudite Guicciardini. And were those walks on the ramparts taken in solitude or with male companions only, one would

like to know? Charles was an accomplished actor and may well have played to the life the part which policy caused him to assume. If Echard had real grounds for his remarks, then he presents us with a companion historical picture, with Charles II of all people as the protagonist, comparable with the studious Edward VI poring over books of theology under the guidance of the good Roger Ascham. One really likes better the picture given in a contemporary letter dated December 22nd, 1654: "Of news there is nothing almost at present. R. C.* goes a-hunting every day, the weather being favourable. He was yesterday, with a few in company, from morning till three o'clock in the afternoon hunting, and went about twelve miles, but killed only one hare all the time."

From other sources one learns too that dancing and music occupied much of his time, and to one friend, Henry Bennet (later to be the Arlington of the Cabal), he writes praying him to "get me pricked down as many new corrants† and sarrabands, and other little dances, as you can, and bring them with you, for I have got a small fiddler that does not play ill on the fiddle." So interested, indeed, is Charles in such amusements that he speaks of them in a letter to his aunt, the Queen of Bohemia, telling her how "we are

* Rex Carolus.
† Corantos.

now thinking how to pass our time; and in the first place of dancing, in which we find two difficulties, the one for want of the fiddlers, the other for somebody both to teach and assist at the dancing the new dances; and I have got my sister to send for Silvius as one that is able to perform both; for the fideldedies, my Lord Taaffe does promise to be their convoy, and in the mean time we must content ourselves with those that make no difference between a hymn and a coranto." It throws an interesting light on Charles's character, as shewing that strain of worldly wisdom and acumen which ran through the more frivolous side of his nature, that on a date midway between these two letters he should have penned the following missive (dated Collen: 12th Aug: 1655*) to the Earl of Leven, which speaks for itself:—

"My Lord Leven, I hear you have made some contract to levy men in Scotland and to transport them beyond the seas for the service of some foreign Prince, which I doubt not you have undertaken without the least ill purpose towards me; but I look upon all designs of that nature as most prejudicial to my service and most michievous to the Kingdom, and therefore desire you not only to decline it yourself but to dissuade your friends from it, and I am confident your

* It is otherwise important as shewing that Clarendon is wrong in stating that Charles only arrived in Cologne "about the middle of September, 1655."

affection is such to me that you will satisfy me herein, and you shall always find me to be

Your affectionate friend,

Charles R."

By this time his admiration for women and his pursuit of any who might have attracted his attention had become notorious. Royal personages are nearly always subject to suspicion in this respect, and many have given good cause for it; but surely few have so consistently made a god of pleasure as the man who was the ablest of his house. I have already quoted Pepys as an authority for the number of the King's mistresses during his sojourn on the Continent: Lady Byron is spoken of by the diarist as the seventeenth on the list as we have seen, a fact imparted to him by the other great diarist of the period, Evelyn. Another was Catherine Peg, whose son by the King, born in 1657, was afterwards created Earl of Plymouth; still another, in those days of wandering, was Elizabeth Killigrew, whose daughter was made Countess of Yarmouth.* But there were numbers of others—passing fancies—of whom no record survives but about whom Edward Progers, the panderer to, and confidant of, Charles's pleasures, must have known enough to fill a book.

Many of Charles's letters from the Continent throw interesting sidelights on his daily life,

* I shall deal with these ladies of easy ethics in a later chapter.

but those that have survived are discreet enough. The King was too much a past-master already in the arts of seduction to trouble about writing concerning his conquests ; it is generally the least successful who boast most ; and in consequence all we have to record are remarks about his clothes, about a sword which " is the worst I ever saw," a desire expressed for " two beaver hats," and such small beer. However, there is one letter which has a wider interest in that it tells of a jaunt taken by the writer to Frankfort Fair. It is dated September 14th, 1655, and includes such phrases as " My sister and I go on Monday next to the fair at Frankfort incognito : at your return you shall hear what has been done." But the subsequent reference is brief enough : " We returned to this place on Tuesday last," he writes, " and all our company very well pleased with our voyage, for indeed it was as pleasant a journey as ever I saw, and some of us wished *Whereas's** company very often." It appears that it was at Frankfort that Charles met Christina, Queen of Sweden, then on a journey to Italy ; only two years later she was to startle Europe by the cold-blooded murder of Monaldeschi, at Fontainebleau. During his journey to and from Frankfort Charles and his party were received with great friendliness by the various petty rulers through

* The name he gave to Henry Jermyn, to whom the letter is addressed.

whose territories they passed, especially the Prince Elector of Mentz; which caused Eglesfield* to remark that, " thus we see what respect his Majesty found in a foreign country, and in his lowest fortune, the greatness of his virtues causing him to be every where extremely valued, not for what he enjoyed, but for what he truly deserved."

After he had resided for two years at Cologne, Charles was invited by the King of Spain to take up his residence in his Flemish possessions, and accordingly he, together with the Duke of York, removed to Bruges, where, " he was received with great expressions of honour and respect." It is unwise to take *au pied de la lettre* the statements regarding illustrious persons made either by known opponents or interested friends, and therefore Thurloe's assertion that the court of Charles at Bruges was a continual scene of debauchery and profligacy is probably as loose a remark as was Eglesfield's concerning the greatness of the King's virtues. At the same time, allowing for the shortness of money from which that court suffered and the almost constant need its members were in even for the necessaries of life, we can readily understand that the happy-go-lucky character of the chief personage reflected itself on his *entourage*, and that the Horatian motto *Carpe diem* was followed rather than wiser and more provident precepts. Among the Thurloe papers

* *Monarchy Revived in the Most Illustrious Charles II*, 1661.

is a letter from one Butler, dated from Flushing on December 2nd, 1656, which gives us an insight into what was taking place :—

"Charles Stuart's Court groweth very numerous. This week one of the richest churches in Bruges was plundered in the night : the people of Bruges are fully persuaded that Charles Stuart's followers had done it : they spare no charges to find out the guilty, and if it happen to light upon any of Charles Stuart's train it will certainly incense that people against them. There is now a company of French comedians at Bruges who are very punctually attended by Charles Stuart and his Court, and all the ladies there: their most solemn day of acting is on the Lord's day. I think I may truly say that greater abominations were never practised among people than at this day at Charles Stuart's Court. Fornication, drunkenness and adultery are esteemed no sins among them."

A man who habitually styles his sovereign Charles Stuart *tout court* should perhaps be regarded as a hostile witness, and we must remember that it was the desire of the existing government in England to bring Charles and his surroundings into as much disrepute as possible. Courts, too, such as his, while largely composed of faithful adherents, are often enough the happy hunting-ground of those *chevaliers d'industrie* who hope in them to mend broken fortunes and to prey on illustrious persons with whom by force of circum-

stances they are able to enter into intimate relations impossible in normal conditions. Some such may have been responsible for the depredations in the church; and the poverty of Charles and his Court, evidences of which abound in letters of the period, may have seemed a good reason for suspecting more highly placed victims of penury. The increasing size of the Court accounts largely for the straitened circumstances of the King, who had now apparently only the pension allowed by Spain, amounting to some £9,000 a year, to meet all his charges. That he was constantly borrowing, or trying to borrow money, is proved by such documents as this, addressed to John Fotherly, of Rickmansworth :—

" I doe acknowledge to have received the sum of one hundred pounds sterling, which I doe promise to repay as soon as I am able.

Charles R.

Bruges, 21 Dec : 1657."

The Duke of York, then at Coukerk, was doing his best to obtain assistance : " I presse Don John every day for something for the English," he writes to his brother about this time, " but can gett nothing yet but promises of moneys for them which shall not want solicitting till I gett it " ; while Hyde (afterwards Lord Clarendon) speaks of their being " without a dollar," adding that those who have neither money nor

credit are like to keep a very cold Christmas* ; " my wife is ready to lie in," he moans, " and all things wanting."

However much Charles and his little Court may have tried to enjoy themselves, it is certain that in the intervals of dalliance the King himself turned often from the smiles and favours of fair ladies in order to project and discuss methods for getting back his kingdom, and plots to such an end were as numerous as the traditional Vallambrosian leaves. Nor were his enemies idle with counter-plots. Of these the most famous was the project concerted by Cromwell and Thurloe for getting the King into their hands by means of a ruse organised by Sir Richard Willis, by which Charles was promised assistance if he landed in a certain part of Sussex. The story is that this was discussed by Cromwell and Thurloe in the presence of the latter's secretary, Sir Samuel Morland, who pretended to be sleeping at his desk, but who was really very much awake and was able to warn the King of the snare about to be laid for him.† Nor were the Royalists' plots more successful, for always did the lynx-eyed emissaries of Cromwell (many of whom were no doubt masquerading at Charles's Court as friends to his cause) find them out and report to London.

* Ormonde Papers.

† See the well-known story in Burnet and elsewhere.

The King continued to reside at Bruges, although an expedition to Fontarabia, more or less of a political character, helped to diversify the monotony of his existence there—a monotony, it is true, he did his best to assuage by indulgence in what the Puritans termed his low amours, although even some of these are found excusing him on the ground of his youth and the example of continental princes and other high personages. His philosophical waiting on events was regarded by his enemies as mere weakness ; they supposed him so dominated by pleasure as to think of nothing else. But they mistook his character, and were liable to attribute to him the same ignorance and weakness as appeared in many of his followers. There is no doubt that many of these with their mutual jealousies, their self-seeking, and their absolute treachery, were ill-fitted to advise a young man in the attitude he should assume against the ablest statesman in Europe.

The death of that remarkable man, the news of which was brought to Charles as he was playing tennis at the village of Hochstratten* by Sir Stephen Fox, entirely changed the outlook of affairs. Charles, in order to be in closer touch with his friends in England, soon after went back to Brussels. It was while here that he made that

* He had gone to Brussels in the February of 1658 and removed, probably for the summer, to Hochstratten in the following August.

second expedition to the Hague, in order to visit his sister the Princess of Orange, which but for the intervention and warning of Sir George Downing, at that time Cromwell's ambassador to the States General, might have resulted in his being apprehended. The story is told by Lockhart in his *Memoirs*; it is sufficient here to say that the King, thus put on his guard, was enabled to return to Brussels without mishap.

It would seem that shortly after this Charles went to Spain to procure monetary assistance, because when General Monk sent him a verbal message through Sir John Granville, who had gone over to England on the King's behalf, he advised him to leave Spanish territory, "lest he shall be detained as a pledge for the recovery of Dunkirk and Jamaica." * This he at once did, making his way to Breda, Granville being sent back with a letter from him to the Parliament, by whom it was ordered to be printed.†

There is no necessity to recapitulate the various events which led to the Restoration. They form part of the political history of the period and are therefore beyond the scope of this small volume. It is sufficient to say that on Oliver Cromwell's death, on September 3rd, 1658, his son Richard

* *Personal History of Charles II compiled from various authentic sources.*

† Charles also sent a letter to the House of Lords, which was read on May 1st, 1660, and was ordered to be printed and published "forthwith."

was proclaimed Lord Protector, an office for which he was totally unfitted by endowments and inclination and which he abdicated in the May of the following year. On the 8th of that month the two Houses of Parliament assembled and Charles was proclaimed King with great pomp and circumstance at Whitehall and Temple Bar. A present of £50,000 was immediately granted to him, £10,000 being given to the Duke of York, and £5,000 to the Duke of Gloucester, while Admiral Montague was commanded to take a squadron to the Dutch coast in order to convey him to his dominions. Charles, in the meanwhile, had removed from Breda to The Hague, where he was splendidly entertained by the States General. His condition had become at this moment so desperate that, if we are to credit Pepys, his clothes and those of his attendants were together not worth a couple of pounds, and so delighted was he at the money sent him that he called the Duke of York into the room to see it as it lay packed in a trunk. On May 24th he embarked at Scheveningen (off which town Monk just seven years before had defeated the Dutch fleet under Van Tromp), and on the following day came in sight of his own land. He delayed landing till May 26th, on the morning of which he touched English ground for the first time since he had left Shoreham as a fugitive, nearly nine years previously.

CHAPTER V.

THE RESTORATION.

SELDOM if ever had London assumed such an air of jubilation as on the 29th of May, 1660, the day on which the King came again into his own. Heath, in his *Glories and Magnificent Triumphs of the Blessed Restoration of His Sacred Majesty King Charles the Second,* has left an elaborate account of the ceremonies and festivities which took place on that eventful day, and Rugge and other journal-writers of the period have contributed details to the more ceremonial statements of Court chroniclers. Indeed, a shower of books and pamphlets fell on the country, expressive of wonder and joy at the happy event, an event at which even the sober Evelyn was to use unwontedly enthusiastic expressions. As the diarist stood in the Strand and watched the passing of the pageant, he blessed God, for " it was the Lord's doing, for such a restauration was never mention'd in any history antient or modern, since the returne of the Jews from the Babylonish

captivity; nor so joyfull a day and so bright ever seene in this nation; this hapning, when to expect or effect it, was past all human policy."

Nothing was wanting to denote adequately the joy of a people to whom all opportunities of self-expression had been long denied, and who had become so tired of the dulness of the Commonwealth that they were ready to welcome any change, and willingly took King Stork in place of King Log. One could have wished that Pepys had been in London to take part in and describe the rejoicings, but he was with the Fleet, having been over in Holland whither he had gone, as newly made Secretary, with Admiral Sir Edward Montague. Thus, although he can tell us of his interview with the King who, walking up and down the ship gave him some details of his escape after Worcester, and can describe the ceremonies at Dover, he has of course nothing to relate as to London's great reception of its sovereign; of the balconies bedecked with brocades; the conduits flowing with wine; the flying of innumerable flags and the booming of incessant guns. A relation of such a spontaneous exhibition of joy and loyalty would have appealed to the Secretary to the Navy, but we may be sure that he would have noted too the sullen and lowering countenances of the troops drawn up on Blackheath, which even the smiles and habitual courtesy of Charles were unable to dispel.

Macaulay closes a fine passage, descriptive of the doings of that great day, by stating that "the restored wanderer reposed safe in the palace of his ancestors." Truth compels one, however, to remark that the phrase can only be taken figuratively, for it is characteristic of Charles that so far from doing this he in reality spent the first night of his return with Mrs. Palmer, the lady who was to become notorious as Countess of Castlemaine and Duchess of Cleveland, at the residence of Sir Samuel Morland at Lambeth, on the spot which Vauxhall was later to occupy, a house not infrequently at a later period visited by Charles and other fair companions of his pleasures.*

Pleasant as this dallying with beautiful courtesans was to one of Charles's temperament, he realised—as did his advisers and the people at large—that it was necessary for him to find some lady of royal birth to share his throne. During his sojourn abroad numerous projects of this kind had been put forward—only to bring disappointment in their train. He had, it is said, proposed for the hand of Cromwell's youngest daughter, Frances, the intermediary being Lord Broghill, afterwards Earl of Orrery; but the Protector would have none of it. "No," he said,

* Morland was a favourite of Charles who was interested in the various mechanical devices of which he was the inventor, besides having benefited by his loyalty when abroad, and as the text shews by his complaisance when at home.

R. Earlom. sculp.t

BARBARA, DUTCHESS OF CLEVELAND.

Ætat 1709.

From an original Drawing in Colours by Eatherne

in the possession of the Publisher.

London Published by S. Woodburn, 1819.

" he would never forgive me for the death of his father " ; adding, " besides, he is so damnably debauched he cannot be trusted." To this refusal was shortly afterwards to be added that of Cardinal Mazarin, for whose lovely niece, Hortense Mancini, and her equally lovely fortune, Charles had sued through Lord Jermyn. Later, when he had become King, the Cardinal wished to re-open the matter, but this time it was Charles who refused to consider as his queen the lady whom he was subsequently to make one of his many mistresses.

Yet another matrimonial project which at one time did seem likely to lead to results was that match with Mademoiselle the eldest daughter of the Duc d'Orleans, to which I have already alluded. With her rich appanage of the Duchy of Montpensier she appealed to Henrietta Maria, and was not regarded unfavourably by Charles himself who at one time was a constant visitor to her. However, when it seemed likely that she might become the wife of a King *in esse*, Louis XIV, she cooled off from the idea of marrying one who was a sovereign only in name ; and again Charles was turned down, as the phrase is now.

Nor was this the last of his efforts while abroad to seek in marriage some improvement in his position. The Princess Dowager of Orange had a daughter, Henrietta, and a letter* from Charles to her mother is in existence in which he desires

* Carte prints it.

to know if a proposal from him for her hand would be acceptable. The reasons why nothing came of this are obscure, but we are told by Clarendon that he considered the Dowager Princess had not treated him well in the matter. Difficulties also arose in the case of the Duc de Lorraine's daughter, for whose hand Charles also made an offer.

It would seem that even these were not all the attempts made by Charles to secure a wife, and among other projects of this nature is one alluded to by Clarendon† concerning " a lady of great beauty, of a presence very graceful and alluring, and a wit and behaviour that captivated those who were admitted into her presence." This mysterious lady was the widow " of a Duke of an illustrious name who had been killed fighting for the King in the late troubles." Both Lord Bristol and Lord Crofts were enamoured of the lady, but finding their advances hopeless determined, as they thought, to merit her favours by proposing a royal alliance. However, again the matter fell through, the lady " declaring herself to be much unworthy of such grace."

So it happened that Charles came into his kingdom a bachelor, and one of the first things to be considered by his advisers was a suitable match for him. His predilection for the fair sex, no doubt, made them anxious to prevent a *mésalliance* into which his ardent temperament

† *History of the Rebellion*, Book XIV.

might not improbably lead him. Charles's position was now a very different one from what it had been when he was an impecunious wanderer among foreign courts. The head of a nation whose power had been consolidated and enlarged by the forceful administration of Cromwell, who had made England feared abroad as she had not been feared since the days of Edward III and Henry V, he was in a position to choose, not to sue ; and after several suggested alliances had been considered and rejected—he would have no German wife, for " od's fish," he once exclaimed, " I could not marry one of them, they are all foggy "—he decided on the Infanta of Portugal, Catherine of Braganza, a lady whose great dowry included the island of Bombay, the fortress of Tangiers, and half a million of money, and whose personal appearance, as revealed to Charles through the medium of a portrait* (" I am sure," he remarked, " that person could not be unhandsome ") seemed quite satisfactory. Indeed it would not much have mattered had it been otherwise, for the King was so surfeited with complacent beauty in other people's wives as to be able to dispense with much in his own.

It was in the midst of the preparations for the reception of Catherine that De Grammont, to whom we are indebted for so many curious and

* Richard Bull presented this identical picture to Horace Walpole. It was in the Strawberry Hill Sale, Lot 94 in the twentieth day's dispersal.

scandalous details of the English Court, arrived in this country. On his authority we learn that the Queen " was far from appearing with splendour in the charming court where she came to reign ; " however, in the end, he tells us, " she was pretty successful." As a matter of fact, during her early days in this country she did make an effort to curb Charles in his licentious conduct, but finding his a hopeless case she made the best of a bad bargain and managed to live on terms of a friendly neutrality with him.

From the pictures that have come down to us Catherine would seem to have been more attractive than reports make her out. Indeed, Clarendon says of her that she had " beauty and wit enough to make herself agreeable to the King, and that it is certain that at their first meeting, and for some time after, the King had very good satisfaction in her." Evelyn, too, noticing her arrival, speak- of her, compared with her train of female attends ants, as being " of the handsomest countenance of all the rest, and, though low of stature, prettily shaped, languishing and excellent eyes, her teeth wronging her mouth by sticking a little too far out ; for the rest lovely enough." Pepys, who had not then seen her, was told that " she was a most pretty woman," and adds that " all people say of her to be a very fine and handsome lady and very discreet, and that the King is well enough pleased with her : which I fear will put Madame Castle-

maine's nose out of joynt." That was in June, but four months later the novelty had begun to wear off, and we hear of Charles showing "no countenance" to his bride's attendants, Portuguese or English, "for fear they should tell her how he carries himself to Lady Castlemaine." As a matter of fact the Queen appears to have been perfectly cognisant of the fact, "but," says Pepys, "though she hath spirit enough, yet seeing that she do no good by taking notice of it, for the present she forbears it in policy." Burnet, writing about the royal marriage, remarks that he saw the letter that the King writ to the Earl of Clarendon the day after that event, "by which it appeared very plainly that the marriage was consummated, and that the King was very well pleased with her." This passage in the bishop's *History* is an interesting one, as there were at the time those who doubted that the pair had ever cohabited. So far from this is Burnet's testimony that the King himself told him that the Queen had been with child, and "Willis the great physician told Doctor Lloyd, from whom I had it, that she had once miscarried of a child, which was so far advanced that, if it had been carefully looked to, the sex might have been distinguished." The continuation of the passage may be here given: "For some time the King carried things decently and did not visit his mistress openly. But he grew weary of that restraint, and shook

it off so entirely that he had, ever after that, mistresses to the end of his life, to the great scandal of the world and to the particular reproach of all that served about him in the Church. He usually came from his mistresses' lodgings to Church, even on Sacrament days. He held as it were a Court in them, and all his ministers made application to them." All, that is to say, but two—the Earls of Clarendon and Southampton—who "would never so much as make a visit to any of them." The ultimate disgrace of Charles's one capable minister was chiefly due to the *spretae injuria formae* of these highly-placed courtesans.

It is known that Charles added to the marital indignities to which he exposed his wife from the first months of their married life till his death. One of the most notorious of his acts in this connection was his insistence on her appointing his mistress, Lady Castlemaine, a lady of the bed-chamber. The following letter written to Lord Clarendon at the time shews how greatly the King was under the domination of that vicious person—

"I forgott, when you were here last, to desire you give Brodericke* good councell not to meddle any more with what concerns my lady Castle-

* Sir Alan Broderick, I imagine, who died in 1680, "whose life had been acted off in the sports and follies of sin."—Funeral sermon preached on him by Nathaniel Resbury, December 3rd, 1680.

maine, and to let him have a care how he is the author of any scandalous reports, for if I find him guilty of any such thing I will make him repent it to the last moment of his life. And now I am entered on this matter, I think it very necessary to give you a little good councell in it, least you may think that, by making a farther stir in the business, you may divert me from my resolution ; which all the world shall never do : and I wish I may be unhappy in this world and in the world to come, if I faile in the least degree of what I have resolved, which is, of making my lady Castlemaine of my wife's bedchamber : and whosoever I find use any endeavours to hinder this resolution of mine (except it be only to myselfe) I will be his enemy to the last moment of my life. You know how true a friende I have been to you : if you will oblige me eternally, make this business as easy to me as you can, of what opinion soever you are of ; for I am resolved to go through this matter let what will come on it, which again I solemnly swear, before Almighty God : therefore, if you desire to have the continuance of my friendship, meddle no more with this businesse, excepte it be to break down all false and scandalous reports, and to facilitate what I am sure my honour is so much concerned in ; and whosoever I finde to be my lady Castlemaine's enemy in this matter, I do promise, upon my word, to be his enemy as long as I live. You may show this letter to my

lord lieutenant* ; and if you have both a mind to oblige me, carry yourselves like friends in this matter.

Charles R."

The secret history of this unsavoury episode reveals a determination in Charles and a compliance on the part of his great minister little to the credit of either. The Queen at first shewed herself as determined as the King and absolutely refused to receive her husband's mistress as one of her own attendants, and according to Harris† it was not till after receiving the most shocking treatment from his Majesty that Catherine yielded, and the notorious Lady Castlemaine to all intents and purposes governed Whitehall and indirectly the country. As we shall see, she was to share the favour of Charles with many other ladies of equally easy virtue, but by some means or other she exercised her influence for a longer period than any of her rivals, some of whom, there seems little reason to doubt, were purposely put in the King's way by the lady herself in order to hide or justify her infidelities in other directions.

Another personal matter which occupied Charles's mind soon after his Restoration is one which forms a pleasant antithesis to his relations with his wife and his sordid existence as the " Old

* Ormonde.

† *Life of Charles II.*

Rowley" * of a mixed seraglio. This was his anxiety to reward those who had assisted him in his escape from England after the defeat at Worcester. Charles has been accused of ingratitude —a characteristic not uncommon in his family— and indeed instances will have to be recorded where his neglect of obligation after he was safely restored to his own is sufficiently marked. But as against this must be placed the rewards he heaped on those who had risked their fortunes and even their lives in concealing him and facilitating his escape.

We have seen how Miss Lane† was received by him in France. After the Restoration an annuity of £1,000 was settled on her, and the King presented her with a gold watch and his portrait, which objects he desired should descend to the eldest daughter of the family from generation to generation. On Colonel Lane, her brother, he bestowed a pension of £500. To Colonel Wyndham‡ and his heirs for ever an annuity of £600 was granted, and on his widow, Lady Wyndham, £300 a year with reversion to her two daughters. Colonel Philips received a similar

* The nickname is said to have been applied to Charles probably by Rochester, it being that of a celebrated stallion of the period. But "Welcome home, old Rowley" is the name of a well-known Scotch tune, otherwise called "Haud awa' frae me, Donald." See Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, vol. iv, p. 318, and also page 211 of this volume.

† Miss Lane subsequently married Sir Clement Fisher, of Packington Hall, Warwickshire.

‡ He was afterwards made Governor of Dunster Castle and in 1673 was created a baronet.

amount, and Charles Gifford, Esq., £300 a year during his life. Annuities of £200 were given to Thomas Whitgrave, Francis Manwel, and Miss Juliana Coningsby; half that amount to William Ellesdon, and a grant of additional arms as well as other favours to Colonel Careless. It need hardly be said that in this distribution of rewards the Penderell family was not forgotten. Indeed, the five brothers were invited to Whitehall, where they were received with every mark of graciousness, the King publicly acknowledging their great services to him, and familiarly discussing with them the events through which, largely owing to their devotion, he had passed safely.* On Richard and William and their heirs for ever a pension of £500 was conferred; Humphrey, George and John received annuities of 100 marks a year; and Elizabeth Yates, their sister, £50 a year for life. Richard died in 1671 and lies buried in the church of St. Giles in the Fields, where he is described as "preserver and conduct to his sacred Majesty King Charles II after his escape from Worcester fight," on the altar tomb to his memory in the churchyard. William died in 1710, aged eighty-four, and it was he, no doubt, who had cause to complain of the discontinuance of the annuity during the reign of William III.

* In a letter from Dr. Charlett to Pepys, dated September 26th, 1702, the fact is mentioned that some of the Penderells were still living, but were complaining that their pensions had been stopped in the late reign—that of William III.

The family is to-day represented by the well-known author, and late Editor of *The Guardian*, Mr. J. G. J. Penderel-Brodhurst.

Lord Clarendon, who had attended Charles so assiduously abroad, and by whose advice so many of his wiser actions were regulated, was well recompensed, for soon after the King's return he received a sum of £20,000, and had the manor of Cornbury, forfeited by the attainder of Sir John Danvers, conferred on him. His retort,* therefore, to those who accused the King of ingratitude, deserved as it no doubt was by many who hoped to reap a large reward for slight services, was bitterly resented by many who had lost their all in the royal cause, and created implacable hatred against him in many an impoverished cavalier who saw his critic himself loaded with honours and rewards. Clarendon, according to some authorities, advised Charles to gain over his enemies since he was sure of his friends on account of their principles, and some of the satires of the time gave point to the accusation. Marvell has some lines suggestive of this policy ; and even Rochester dared to indite the following :—

> "His father's foes he does reward,
> Preserving those that cut off 's head :
> Old Cavaliers, the Crown's best guard,
> He lets them starve for want of bread.
> Never was any King endu'd
> With so much grace and gratitude."

* See Clarendon's *Continuation* of his *History*, vol. ii, p. 35.

Nor can one pass over Charles's treatment of the Earl of Argyle and the Stanley family without recognising that the King's gratitude was largely of a partial and personal character. Those with whom he had come into actual contact were rewarded as we have seen ; those whose services were equally great but who may be termed rather as general than personal friends were disregarded, and the ample promises made them forgotten or rescinded.

Another reproach has been levelled at Charles, that, although the Parliament was willing to have voted a sum for the purpose, no memorial was ever erected by him to the memory of his father ; yet another is that he allowed the execution of Sir Harry Vane. And, indeed, little can be said in extenuation of these errors of omission and commission. The peculiar character of Charles can alone account for much which, by the light of subsequent events, seems incomprehensible. His very easy-going nature, the light and foolish people with whom he surrounded himself, his dislike of business matters, or indeed of anything that was capable of interfering with his pleasures, all combined in causing him to leave to others the consideration of matters which a wiser ruler would have judged for himself ; and thus he had too often to bear the onus of his advisers' misdeeds because those advisers were ill-chosen and he himself indifferent. Only in such matters as concerned

his immediate surroundings does Charles appear to have taken up a determined stand : he left the conduct of national affairs in the hands of Clarendon, or the Cabal : but when the status of one of his mistresses was involved he could prove as firm as if the status of the country was concerned. He was as listless at a Council-meeting as he was alert and interested in a laboratory ; he could discuss philosophy with Hobbes, or science with Evelyn, or architecture with Wren ; on occasion he could galvanise himself into a sort of mechanical interest in questions of government or policy ; but a word from a mistress or the gambol of a spaniel, the lute-singing of an Italian boy or the gyrations of the waterfowl in St. James's Park, would drive all such serious subjects from his mind ; and he passed his days in a sort of see-saw between the listless idling of a *dilettante* and the sudden accesses of interest in an experiment which were worthy of a serious investigator. He was as much an antithesis as Pope said the Sporus of his bitter lines was. Above all, he was a man who had suffered much and who determined that *en revanche* he would for the rest of his life suffer as little as possible. There is a sort of calculated purpose running through the career of Charles as King ; the purpose of an able sceptic ; the purpose of a thoroughly selfish sensualist. Nothing was to be permitted to interfere with his pursuit of pleasure—whether that pleasure took its various

forms of toying with his mistresses or his lap-dogs ; of sauntering in his park ; of bandying indecent witticisms with his courtiers ; of arguing with now a bishop, now a player, on the comparative merits of their respective professions. A man who is shameless in his personal life will hardly be expected to have more care for his monarchial reputation. Charles took bribes from France with the same easy *nonchalance* as he took favours from Lady Castlemaine or the Duchess of Portsmouth ; he was as indifferent to public opinion as he was to the opinion of his servants, and he did things in the sight of Europe as he did things in the sight of his lackeys which created the derision of foreign courts and of his own back-stairs in an equal degree.

The joy at the Restoration which brought with it a brighter, more ample, conception of existence after a long period of darkness when men's natural instincts were kept in an unnatural restraint, blinded many to the licence which was vitiating not only the Court but a large section of society. Many of the judicious grieved at so big a swing of the pendulum, no doubt. It was, they probably thought, but a temporary reaction. The delight in once more having a member of the old ruling family at Whitehall blinded them to the fact that although a feast is pleasant it is often expensive and not infrequently productive of ill effects. And for a time, so far as the country

at large was concerned, it did not greatly matter. Cromwell had left a tremendous legacy—a legacy in which England remained a dominant note in the counsels of Europe ; in which it was feared and respected abroad as it had been prosperous (though dull to extinction) at home. It took a good deal to destroy the fabric which the Protector had raised, but Charles did it. After the first flush of change had worn off, people began to ask themselves how they were benefited. Those, and there were many of them, who sympathised with the Cromwellian *régime* were frankly disgusted at the licentiousness which spread itself from the Court throughout radiating sections of society. Those who had covertly sided with the King's party, and even those who had never hesitated to express their dislike for the Commonwealth, began to murmur, and satires and lampoons, some witty, many both witty and indecent, not a few merely indecent, began to appear, aimed at the King and the Court of which he was a fitting head. The grave Evelyn is found reprehending the tendencies of the time, and even Pepys, not a rigid moralist as we all know, shows over and over again in his diary that he regarded with the gravest apprehension not so much the sins of society but the exhibition of those sins to the eyes of the proletariat ; while the pages of Clarendon and Burnet afford unmistakable proofs that those

far-seeking men anticipated the worst from the growing decadence.

Why the worst never happened is a problem which is not easily soluble, unless it be for much the same reason that the worst did not happen at a later date when George IV's Court was, *mutatis mutandis*, equally disreputable. The fact is bad kings seldom run the risks of weak ones. The revolutionary and the assassin do not seem to aim at what is autocratic so much as at what is feeble; so that we find Charles I executed, and Charles II unharmed.* Again, there is this reason for the people bearing with a discredited Court, an impoverished exchequer, and a gradually disintegrating empire: they had recently experienced all the horrors of civil war, they had had brought home to them the dreariness of rampant Puritanism; and they doubtless felt that rather than again be exposed to such depredations and *désagrémens*, it was worth while undergoing the ills to which bad government and extravagance exposed them. Foreign affairs seldom affect the people of this country; they did so then in an even lesser degree than is now the case; and consequently the loss of our reputation abroad, even the sight of Van Tromp's broom in the mouth of the Thames itself, were of the nature of portents

* The Rye House Plot did attempt something, but it came to naught. Queen Victoria's life was on several occasions attempted, George IV's never. The most autocratic of the Czars were those who died naturally; it was the feeble, or those who shewed a desire to improve the condition of the people, who suffered violent deaths.

of which the country at large was incapable of estimating the real significance.

In the meanwhile, happy, careless, licentious, the Court at Whitehall passed its unregarded hours, Charles sauntering through life, his mistresses eating up the resources of the kingdom, his queen sitting solitary in her apartments, a disillusioned woman.

But it is time to say something of those who constituted the harem of Charles II ; of those who pandered to his pleasures ; of those who partook of his vices, his *idlesse*, his good manners, and his wit.

CHAPTER VI.

HIS TITLED MISTRESSES.

The Duchess of Cleveland.

AS we have seen, Charles II began his career of profligacy early, and even before his Restoration he is known to have had nearly, if not quite, two score of mistresses on the Continent. Of these, one of the latest, and of all the King's favourites the one who exercised her sway longest, was the lady known first as Lady Castlemaine and afterwards as Duchess of Cleveland. Readers of Pepys's Diary are familiar enough with his record of the beauty and vagaries of this undoubtedly fascinating creature. Indeed, the susceptible Secretary to the Admiralty cannot keep her name for long out of his pages, where it recurs on innumerable occasions and under all sorts of circumstances.

She was born in 1640, the daughter of Lord Grandison, and at the age of eighteen was married to Roger Palmer, then a student of law and the heir to a considerable property. Roger Palmer seems to have been a weak, rather foolish person,

who dabbled in literature (not in itself a healthy sign) and was otherwise the recognised type of the complacent husband, ready to receive a title and money as the price of his wife's fidelity—to others.

It was in 1659 that the couple first met Charles, whose Court at Bruges they joined. They were doubly welcome, the husband because he was ready to advance money, the wife because she was as generous with *her* personal property. If report is to be believed she had already been the mistress of Lord Chesterfield before her marriage, and there is no doubt that Charles exhibited great jealousy with regard to the man for whom his new mistress showed at times a lingering partiality; indeed the daughter born to her in February, 1661 (afterwards Countess of Sussex) was by many regarded as having had Chesterfield for her father —certainly the King was chary of acknowledging the child as his. Few things shew the domination which this beautiful but shameless creature exercised over the mind of Charles more than the fact that in spite of her almost open infidelities, in spite of her temper and imperious conduct, in spite of a thousand troubles and annoyances to which she almost daily exposed him, he not merely remained her slave but at her bidding did all sorts of things which must have been repugnant to a man of his undoubted judgment. One of the most scandalous of these was the

forcing her on the new Queen as a member of her household. To do this it was necessary that she should be a titled lady, and means were not difficult to find to persuade her weak husband to accept a peerage, plain Mr. Roger Palmer becoming Earl of Castlemaine. A passage in Pepys's Diary indicates that the new-made Earl hovered for a time about the Court, a witness of his wife's shame and an example of his own disgrace, but disputes arising concerning, of all things, religious differences, Castlemaine retired to the Continent. He appears subsequently as implicated in the Popish Plot (he was a devout Roman), and in the next reign as envoy from James to the Pope. Later, he disappeared to the fastnesses of Wales, where he died in 1705.*

The following curious passage concerning the King's attempt to force his Mistress on the Queen's notice is given in one of the many histories of the period: "After Charles's marriage, his first great difficulty was to reconcile his new Queen to his mistress, Lady Castlemaine. He had previously endeavoured to stifle the jealousy of the latter by promising that on his union she should be made one of the ladies of the queen's bedchamber. Accordingly, at the head of the list of appointments Catherine was startled by seeing the name of the dreaded Lady Castlemaine, of whom she

* He died at Oswestry, Salop, and was buried at Welshpool, Montgomery. For a detailed account of him see Vicary Gibbs: *The Complete Peerage*, vol. iii, pp. 90-91.

had received previous notice. She instantly drew her pen across it, and cut short all remonstrance by telling the King he must either accede to her wishes or send her back to Lisbon. Charles yielded at the time, but again tried the experiment by presenting his mistress to her Majesty before the assembled Court. Not having distinctly heard the name, Catherine, to the surprise of every one, received her graciously and permitted her to kiss her hand. A whisper from one of her Portuguese ladies admonished her of the fact. Her colour instantly changed ; her eyes suffused with tears ; and the blood gushing from her nostrils, she was carried from the apartment in a fit."

Subsequently, by the successive methods of entreaty, expostulation, threats and neglect, interspersed with promises of amendment which were immediately broken, Charles had his way and Lady Castlemaine was not only accepted as a lady in waiting but received by the injured Queen on terms of, at least outward, friendliness. Few things shew more markedly the domination of this masterful woman than the way she caused the King to treat his wife on her behalf. And yet it is a fact that Charles seems to have had a strain of pity in his constitution for the ill-used Queen, for we know that when the Duke of Buckingham once had the audacity to suggest kidnapping her and sending her away to one of the plantations, he was furious, saying, " It was

a wicked thing to make a poor lady miserable only because she was his wife, and had no children by him, which was not her fault;" and on another occasion, that of Titus Oates's infamous accusation against the Queen, he remarked, "They think I have a mind to a new wife; but for all that, I will not see an innocent woman abused."

But it is a fact that Charles's sensual propensities dominated the better traits of his character, and in the constant enjoyment of the charms of Lady Castlemaine, varied by similar experiences with other complacent beauties, he forgot his duty as a husband and his dignity as a King. It is difficult to understand the reason for the power which this modern Messalina exercised over Charles for so long a period. We know that, according to Reresby, she was "the finest woman of her age," although the famous portrait of her, as Pallas, shows features rather bold and scornful than actually alluring. Certainly Pepys went mad about her, as innumerable passages in his diary attest, and her infidelities in other directions indicate some subtle power which attracted men so various as Roger Palmer, Lord Chesterfield, Henry Jermyn, Jacob Hall the acrobat, Goodman and Hart the actors, Churchill afterwards Duke of Marlborough, Wycherley, Beau Feilding, and Charles himself, all of whom, and they make a goodly list, at one time or another enjoyed her favours. Some paid for these favours, others

were paid, but her real debtor was a long suffering country. The amount of money she received in various grants, the value of the presents made her by the King and others, is incredible, and only to be equalled by the amounts she squandered at the gaming table and on the luxurious setting in which she lived. There was no end to her inordinate rapacity. Andrew Marvell tells us that, "They have signed and sealed ten thousand pounds a year more to the Duchess of Cleveland,* who has likewise near ten thousand pounds a year more out of the new farm of the county excise of beer and ale, five thousand pounds a year out of the Post Office, and, they say, the reversion . . . of all places in the Custom house, the Green Wax, and indeed, what not! All promotions, spiritual and temporal, pass under her cognizance." Nothing, indeed, that she asked for was denied her—except a grant of Phœnix Park, Dublin, which she once had the audacity to demand, although we may be sure she found some means of extracting from the easy-going Charles some equivalent. Once, we know, he gave over to her all the Christmas presents he had received from the Court, and her display of jewels is said to have outshone those of the Queen and the Duchess of York combined. Indeed, of all the mistresses of all the English monarchs the Duchess of Cleveland was as easily first in the

* She was so created in 1670.

rapacity characteristic of so many of her profession, as she was in her love of pleasure and luxury. She was a nymphomaniac and a harpy combined, and in the Court of Charles II she found a happy hunting ground for both passions.

Pepys's Diary which, as I have said, is full of references to this titled harlot, is within the reach of everyone, so there is no need to fill these pages with extracts concerning the woman for whose beauty he had such an admiration that he occasionally made Mrs. Pepys jealous by talking of her in and out of season. Burnet is not so largely read now, however, and I may quote his remarks on the favourite: "The Duchess of Cleveland," he says, "was a woman of great beauty, but most enormously vicious and ravenous, foolish but imperious, very uneasy to the King, and always carrying on intrigues with other men while yet she pretended she was jealous of him. His passion for her, and her strange behaviour towards him, did so disorder him that often he was not master of himself, nor capable of minding business which, in so critical a time, required great application."

As indicated in this passage the Duchess's jealousy was a cause of constant irritation to Charles. She was for ever picking quarrels with him, and leading him the existence of a henpecked husband. It can be readily imagined how irksome this became to one of his temperament—loving a

quiet, indolent, pleasure-filled life; and that he should have sought in the arms of less exacting beauties a surcease from these perpetual broils is readily understandable. Intriguing with other men of various ranks, the Duchess could not abide the thought of the King being unfaithful to her, and the advent of such new charmers as Eleanor Gwynn and Mary Davis and Frances Stewart filled her with ungovernable fury. But while the influence of the two former *houris* did not materially affect Charles's regard for her—a regard which considering her character and habits must indeed have been deep-seated to endure for the ten years it did—the appearance of the beautiful Stewart gave the death-blow to her power over the King, aggravated as it was by her own *rôle* of the jealous fury. The pages of Grammont, that mine of information on the lighter and more disreputable (if it was anything but light and disreputable) side of Charles II's Court, contain many allusions to the Duchess's vagaries, the gossip to which they gave rise, the satires and lampoons they incited. Among them is the following, which is characteristic of others, and throws a curious light on the surroundings of the Lord's Anointed :—

"It was above a year since Jermyn had triumphed over the weakness of Lady Castlemaine, and above two since the King had been weary of his triumphs. . . . Though the King's

affections for Lady C. were not greatly diminished yet he did not think it consistent with his dignity that a mistress whom he had honoured with public distinction and who still received a considerable support from him, should appear chained to the car of the most ridiculous conqueror that ever existed. His Majesty had frequently expostulated with the Countess on this subject, but his expostulations were never attended to; it was in one of these differences that he, advising her rather to bestow her favours upon Jacob Hall, the rope-dancer, who was able to return them, than lavish away her money on Jermyn to no purpose, since it would be more honourable for her to pass for the mistress of the first than for the very humble servant of the other, she was not proof against his raillery. The impetuosity of her temper broke forth like lightning. She told him 'that it very ill became him to throw out such reproaches against one who of all the women of England deserved them the least; that he had never ceased quarrelling thus unjustly with her ever since he had betrayed his own mean inclinations; that to gratify such a depraved taste as his he wanted only such silly things as Stewart, Wells, and that pitiful strolling actress (Nell Gwynn) whom he had lately introduced into their society.' Floods of tears from rage generally attended these storms; after which, resuming the part of Medea, the scene closed with menaces of tearing her chil-

dren to pieces, and setting his palace on fire. What course could he pursue with such an outrageous fury, who, beautiful as she was, resembled Medea less than her dragons when she was thus enraged ? "

In this posture of affairs, Grammont himself was chosen as mediator, and he, after hearing both sides, drew up the following " articles of peace," as he terms them :—

" That Lady Castlemaine should for ever abandon Jermyn ; that as a proof of her sincerity and the reality of his disgrace she should consent to his being sent, for some time, into the country ; that she should not rail any more against Miss Wells, nor storm any more against Miss Stewart ; and this without any restraint on the King's behaviour to her : that in consideration of these condescensions his Majesty should immediately give her the title of Duchess, with all the honours and privileges thereunto belonging, and an addition to her pension, in order to enable her to support the dignity."

Such was the way in which titles were won in the days of the Merry Monarch ; as Pepys says in another connection, " It is a poor thing for a Prince to do."

Sure of her position, the Duchess openly shewed herself the enemy of the few virtuous people connected with Charles's Court, and Clarendon, Ormonde, and Southampton were all sub-

jected to her intolerable tyranny and active dislike. When the first-named left the King's presence on his dismissal from office, she watched him going disgraced down the steps of the palace and jeered at him as he went. "Madam, if you live, you will grow old," was all he said. That was in 1667 : three years later her own time came. Charles had at last become heartily tired out by her excesses, her violent temper, her inordinate greed. His new passion for Mary Davis and others had no doubt something to do with the change in his feelings ; but the Duchess contributed to it by her shameless intrigues with Hart and Goodman, and later with Churchill. It is said that the Duke of Buckingham made Charles a witness of some amorous passages between his mistress and the handsome young soldier, who only escaped personal chastisement by leaping out of a window. Finally, an intrigue with William Wycherley brought matters to a crisis, and the insatiable courtesan found it convenient to retire to France. However, she must have returned subsequently and before Charles's death, for Evelyn, in that famous passage describing the decadence of the Court, specifically mentions her as being one of the concubines with whom he saw Charles toying just a fortnight before his death.

In 1705, then being in her sixty-sixth year, the Duchess married Robert (Beau) Feilding, who, however, treated her so badly that she was obliged

to invoke the aid of the law for protection, when it was found that "the handsome Englishman" had already another wife living. He was tried for bigamy, and convicted, but afterwards received a free pardon. Four years later the Duchess died at a house she possessed at Chiswick—Walpole House, famous as the school of another adventuress, Becky Sharp. She had three sons and three daughters by Charles II: the Duke of Cleveland, the Duke of Grafton, and the Duke of Northumberland whom Macky calls "a tall dark man like his father"; Charlotte Fitzroy, married to Sir Edward Lee of Ditchley, Oxfordshire; the Countess of Sussex*; and Barbara, who became a nun at Pontoise. The Duke of Grafton had died in 1690, but all the old Duchess had to leave her other children after her many years of rapacity was the estate of Nonsuch, which had been granted to Lord Grandison in trust for her in 1669.

The Duchess of Portsmouth.

It is well known that the advent of Louise de Kerouallet to England arose from motives of State policy. Louis XIV, anxious to detach Charles from the Triple League and to bring about an alliance which was to be known as The Treaty of Dover, chose as ambassadress Charles's sister,

* There is some doubt, as I have before indicated, as to the paternity of this lady.

† Often spelt "Querouaille." Keroualle is the name of a village and chateau in Brittany whence her family had its name.

the Duchesse d'Orleans. She, knowing her brother's predilection, carried with her as one of her ladies in waiting the frail and lovely creature who was destined to preserve a hold on the King's affections till his death. At the date of the embassy, 1670, she was just twenty-five, beautiful in person, with fascinating manners and the proverbial wit and *savoir-faire* of her countrywomen. Charles was instantly smitten with the young lady, who arrived at a moment when the Duchess of Cleveland's temper and failing charms had done so much to alienate even the long-suffering patience of the easy-going monarch. The enemies (among the chief of whom was the Duke of Buckingham) of the Duchess saw this opportunity and were not slow to use it, although it is probable that they might have spared their intrigues. Louise de Keroualle, anglicised into "Carwell," became the King's mistress, and doubtless did her share in persuading him into the disastrous alliance with France.

It was at Portsmouth, whither he had gone to meet his sister, that Charles first saw her so-called maid of honour, and probably there first enjoyed her favours. The lady's subsequent title was therefore an appropriate reminder of the scene of her first amatory and political triumph over the King. I say her first political triumph because during the period of Charles's subsequent life she shewed herself as untiring in intrigues as she

Louize Dutchesse of Portsmouth &c

P. Lely Pinx. A. Blooteling fe. et ex.

was in love. Jesse goes so far indeed as to say that "there was no dishonest transaction, no profligate political intrigue which disgraced the last years of this unhappy reign, in which she does not appear as a principal mover;" a passage which can be confirmed by impartial contemporary records.

Many of Charles's mistresses were the mere playthings of his plenteous leisure; some, like the Duchess of Cleveland, kept him on continual edge by their jealousy of other favourites and their own infidelities; but Louise de Keroualle lulled his senses by her amatory administrations and dulled his sense of dignity and loyalty to his country by her cunning arts of deception and intrigue. As a man he was most degraded by the Duchess of Cleveland; as a monarch he was most disgraced by the Duchess of Portsmouth.

It is a remarkable fact that this French enchantress should have preserved the King's affection more completely than did any other of his mistresses. To her he remained more constant than he had been to any other woman, and to the end of his life she fascinated him and duped him. According to Burnet, "She studied to please and observe him in everything: so that he passed away the rest of his life in a great fondness for her. He kept her at a vast charge. And she by many fits of sickness, some believed real and others thought only pretended, gained of him

everything she desired. She stuck firm to the French interest, and was its chief support. The King divided himself between her and Mistress Gwyn; and had no other avowed amour. But he was so entirely possessed by the Duchess of Portsmouth and so engaged by her in the French interest, that this threw him into great difficulties, and exposed him to great contempt and distrust."

Her appearance was a singular foil to her intriguing mind. Evelyn speaks of her "childish, simple, and baby face." According to Reresby she was "a very fine woman," although he obviously did not think her comparable with the Duchess of Cleveland whom he calls "the finest woman of her age." The simplicity of her appearance, too, is thus noticed in a contemporary poem:—

> "That baby face of thine, and those black eyes,
> Methinks should ne'er a hero's love surprise;
> None, that had eyes, e'er saw in that French face
> O'ermuch of beauty, form, or comely grace."*

Her portraits confirm the fact that if she was a wolf she certainly presented herself to the world in sheep's, nay in lamb's clothing. Her unfortunate influence over Charles was the theme of many a coarse and indecent lampoon, and we find Andrew Marvell, among his satires on Charles and his Court, writing such lines as these about her:—

* Sir Peter Lely painted her with her infant son, the Duke of Richmond, as the Madonna and Child! And the picture was destined for a French nunnery!

"That Carwell, that incestuous punk,
Made our most sacred Sovereign drunk;
And drunk she let him give the buss,
That still the kingdom's bound to curse."

Among the many pasquinades to which the doings of the royal *entourage* gave rise, none were so virulent as those directed against the foreign courtesan. A people always resents interference in its domestic or national affairs by a stranger. Foreign queens have nearly always had to bear the chief brunt of popular fury when things have gone wrong with the country to which they have come. The instances of Henrietta Maria, of Marie Antoinette, of the Empress Eugénie, are cases in point. It is, therefore, hardly to be wondered at that when, not a queen but a mistress, hailing from another land, interferes in politics, the anger of a people is exacerbated beyond what it would naturally be by that foreigner's vitiating sacred Majesty itself and consuming money which should have found a more popular outlet. Louise de Keroualle was thus, in the eyes of the English, doubly culpable. In a satirical piece, published in 1680 and entitled *Articles of High Treason against the Duchess of Portsmouth*, we find her accused of being the cause of general corruption, of selling places in the gift of the Crown for her own advantage, of alienating jewels intended for the Queen of Spain to her own use, and of a variety of acts which might well be regarded as treasonable. Allowing for a certain amount of exaggeration

in these accusations there is no doubt that not only her intriguing but her extravagance was unbounded.

Her apartments at Whitehall were a source of wonder to many, of anger to more. Their luxury was unbounded. Let Evelyn tell us of their magnificent ostentation. It was on September 10th, 1675, that he first saw them: "I was casually shewed the Duchesse of Portsmouth's splendid appartment at White-hall," he writes, "luxuriously furnished, and with ten times the richenesse and glory beyond the Queene's; such massy pieces of plate, whole tables, and stands of incredible value." Again, eight years later he tells us how, "following his Majesty this morning thro' the galleries, I went, with the few who attended him, into the Dutchesse of Portsmouth's dressing-roome within her bed-chamber, where she was in her morning loose garment, her maids combing her, newly out of bed, his Majesty and the gallants standing about her; but that which engaged my curiosity was the rich and splendid furniture of this woman's apartment, now twice and thrice pull'd down and rebuilt to satisfie her prodigal and expensive pleasures, whilst her Majesty's does not exceede some gentlemen's ladies in furniture and accommodation. Here I saw the new fabriq of French tapissry, for designe, tendernesse of work, and incomparable imitation of the best paintings, beyond any thing I had ever

beheld. Some pieces had Versailles, St. Germains, and other palaces of the French King, with hunting, figures, and landskips, exotiq fowls, and all to the life rarely done. Then for Japan cabinets, screens, pendule clocks, greate vases of wrought plate, tables, stands, chimney furniture, sconces, branches, braseras, &c. all of massie silver and out of number, besides some of her Majesty's best paintings. . . . . Surfeiting of this," he adds, "I din'd at Sir Stephen Fox's, and went contented home to my poor but quiet villa. What contentment can there be in riches and splendor of this world purchas'd with vice and dishonour ?"

Other philosophers have often asked a similar question ; the answer the Duchess of Portsmouth would probably have given was that she enjoyed her life of luxury at whatever cost it might be purchased. Indeed, except that at its close she fell on rather hard times, she retained, according to Voltaire, much of her beauty, and we know she lived to be eighty-nine. St. Simon's assertion that she became "très convertie et pénitente" may no doubt be true ; it is so easy to be penitent when the passions are deadened. During Charles's lifetime she remained in favour, although so early as 1682 Reresby says, "His Majesty was not, at this time, thought to be charmed with her bed, it being generally believed that he had not lain with her since he was at Newmarket, at least four months before." Be this as it may, we know

on the authority of Burnet that when Charles lay so long a dying she "sat in the bed, taking care of him, as a wife of a husband." She is supposed to have been responsible for causing the priest to be introduced to Charles in his last moments, and it is not improbable that she confirmed him in the faith to which he had for so long inclined and which only political motives prevented him from openly professing. Barillon, the French Ambassador, tells how he "went to her apartments and found her overwhelmed with grief; the physicians had deprived her of all hope of the King's recovery."

A rather absurd story that she was actually married to Charles was once circulated, and in support of it she is supposed on one occasion to have exclaimed in her broken English: "Me no whore, if me thought me were a whore, me would cut mine own throat." If the lady ever protested so much she must have had peculiar ideas about the significance of the epithet she used, for it is now generally believed that she was not always faithful to the King—although in a less systematic and varied way than was Her Grace of Cleveland—and Lord Danby is mentioned as one of her favoured lovers.

She had been created Duchess of Portsmouth by Charles in 1673—Louis XIV for favours in another direction had made her Duchesse d'Aubigny—and by him she had one son who,

two years later, received the title of Duke of Richmond and Lennox.

The feeling of resentment which the Duchess of Portsmouth aroused in this country is illustrated by some bitter lines which are said to have been written under one of her portraits in the year 1682, in which she is described as "Foe to England, Spy to France." She was then but thirty-seven, and as the following quotation runs :—

> "False and foolish, proud and bold,
> Ugly, as you see, and old:
> In a word, her mighty grace
> Is whore in all things but her face,"

the writer obviously allowed his hatred to get the better of his veracity.

CHAPTER VII.

HIS TITLED MISTRESSES (CONTINUED).

The Duchess of Mazarine.

IF the career of Hortense Mancini cannot be said to "adorn a tale," except in the sense that any career in which vice is uppermost may be supposed to do so as an "awful example," at least her life with its varied incidents, its splendour and its poverty, its early promise and its subsequent disgrace, is well capable of pointing a moral.

I have already mentioned the fact that when Charles was in France he made overtures for the hand of Hortense Mancini but that her uncle, Cardinal Mazarin, would have nothing to say to such a match, although after the Restoration the Cardinal re-opened the question only, to be refused by his former suppliant.

Although, according to Evelyn, "all the world knows her story," it is probable that it was better known then than it is remembered now. She was

the daughter of Lorenzo Mancini, a Roman noble, and Jeronima Mazarine, the sister of the famous Cardinal of that name. Born in 1647, she was when but six years of age sent into France to be educated, and probably no teachers before or since had on their hands so intractable a subject. Her youthful vagaries were such as to astonish and scandalise even the gay nation to which she had been consigned. If we allow for the exaggeration which generally attends the recital of the pranks of the great, we have it on her own showing (for like so many indiscreet persons she wrote her own memoirs*) that she must have been as turbulent and unrestrained as she was beautiful and fascinating. When we read in them such a passage as, " It is not always in our choice to live our own way, and there is a kind of Fatality, even in those things that seem to depend on the wisest Conduct," and then remember the nature of some of her frolics, one cannot but smile in detecting the aphoristic skill of the amanuensis rather than the real feelings of the authoress herself.

From quite an early age she seems to have been both a spendthrift and a free thinker, and the story is told of how, when in Paris, she thought nothing of throwing handfuls of gold from the windows of her uncle's palace in order to see the

* They were actually indited by the Abbé de St. Réal, but appeared under her name and were obviously compiled under her superintendence.

people scrambling for the coins; while as to her indifference to religious observances it is related that Mazarin once said to her: "If you will not attend Mass for the sake of God, at least do it out of fear of the world," a characteristic piece of advice from a great churchman who was also a deep student of human nature. The lot of her governesses and tutors must have been anything but an easy one, for she and her beautiful sister Mary did the wildest things even at their then tender ages.

Charles having refused her as a wife, she was married at the age of thirteen to the Duke de Meilleraye, who had been intended by the Cardinal for her sister but who preferred Hortense, the lovelier of the two. Mazarin made it a condition that the Duke should take his wife's name, and, dying the following year, he left her an immense fortune.

It is hardly possible to conceive a more ill-assorted pair than Meilleraye-Mazarine and his duchess. He was a "*dévot*," and like so many "*dévots*" was narrow-minded, prejudiced, and illiberal. The Duchess's great friend, St. Evremond, has told us how miserable she was and something of her husband's strange idiosyncracies, this among other things: "She used to long for the approach of night, which brings succour to the most unhappy by drowning the sense of their miseries. But even this comfort was denied her.

THE DUCHESS OF MAZARINI.

To face page 128.

No sooner had she closed her beautiful eyes but Monsieur Mazarine, this amiable husband, wakes his best beloved to make her partaker of—what?—to make her partaker of his midnight visions!" The man was, indeed, a religious maniac. What a life the laughter-loving, gay-minded girl must have had of it! However, she bore with her husband's fads for six years, and then turned. She was but nineteen when she sought separation, and while the case was coming on she retired to various convents where, on her own shewing, her conduct was of the strangest. Every mad prank imaginable did she indulge in, and the nuns were harassed out of their lives and got heartily tired of her and her companion, Madame de Coursel, their pack of little yelping dogs, and their habit of mixing ink with the holy water.

The Duchess was ordered to return to her husband, and apparently another attempt was made by her to get on with one with whom few could get on. In 1668 matters again came to a crisis, and in company with her maid, both disguised in male attire, she fled to Italy where she joined her sister, now become Princess Colonna. Eventually, however, a dispute arising between them over a certain M. Courbevill, who not wholly disinterestedly had assisted the Duchess in her flight, she left and hid herself in a nunnery of which her aunt was the superior. Again

her husband sought to get her back, but she managed to escape from her aunt's protection, and after adventures usual with her wherever she went, she reached Marseilles, thence, by all sorts of devices and subterfuges, gaining Chambéry, in spite of pursuit and even threatened assassination.

At Chambéry she took up her residence, at last unmolested, and her house became a sort of centre for illustrious travellers attracted thither by the fame of her beauty, her misfortunes, and her daring. Among these were members of the English Court, and it is quite probable that her determination to visit England emanated from this association. However this may have been, she made up her mind to cross the Channel. This she did from Rotterdam, again not unattended by incident—this time in the shape of a violent storm—and eventually arrived in England in the December of 1675.

There is a famous picture of the Duchess by Mignard at Hinchingbrooke, and one can see by it what a lovely creature she must have been, with her masses of dark hair and her eloquent eyes and protuberant, but not over-developed, charms which, according to the period, she apparently took little care to conceal. No wonder her advent was regarded with apprehension by Charles's mistresses ; no wonder Charles was ready enough to welcome to his seraglio one who shewed herself

so obviously willing to enter it. "The triumph of her conquering eyes," as Waller phrases it,* carried all before it and secured her not only the personal favour of the King but an immediate grant of £3,000 a year which he settled on her.†

Unfortunately we have little information as to the Duchess's career as mistress of Charles II. It is known that she was allotted apartments in Whitehall, and, on the restoration of that palace after the fire, in St. James's Palace; and we also know that she was one of those who surrounded Charles when Evelyn described his Court a couple of weeks before the end. But her actual reign as accredited mistress of the King does not appear to have been of long duration. One reason given for this is that her errant fancy was diverted from his Majesty to the Prince of Monaco, who was then paying a visit to the English Court. With characteristic recklessness she made no secret of her partiality, and thus so annoyed Charles that he withdrew his favour and his pension at the same time, although the latter was subsequently restored.

Under what circumstances she actually left the Court is not recorded; probably she departed, as did others, bag and baggage on the death of the King, and with that event the career of the Duchess so far as it concerns us here, closes. But one may

* In *The Triple Combat*, with which copy of verses he hailed her advent.

† Some accounts say £4,000, but Narcissus Luttrell, in noticing her death in 1699, says "The Government saves £3,000 a year settled on her for her life by King Charles II."—*Brief Relation of State Affairs.*

append a word or two regarding her later existence. She withdrew to a house in Paradise Row, Chelsea, that picturesque group of dwellings which was ruthlessly demolished some years ago (1906), in another of which lived her old friend and mentor, St. Evremond. Here she continued to hold a *salon*, whose philosophical air was lightened by dancing and a basset-table. "Freedom and discretion were equally to be found there," says St. Evremond, whose platonic regard for his still beautiful neighbour is well known. Her passion for amorous intrigue was, however, by no means deadened, and the fact is coarsely hinted at by Rochester who, in his *Farewell to Court*, has the following virulent lines on her dominant characteristic :—

"Though on thy head grey hairs, like Ætna's snow,
Are shed, thou'rt fire and brimstone all below:
Thou monstrous thing, in whom at once do rage
The flames of youth and impotence of age."

As Rochester died in 1680 when the Duchess was but thirty-three, the inference of old age is absurd. Like many dark-haired people her hair may have begun to turn grey early, in fact, if Rochester is accurate it must have done so in her case; but it hardly denoted age or impotence.

There is a good deal of difference between the Duchess of Mazarine and the other titled ladies of Charles II's Court. Some of these were certainly of noble birth, but none would have aspired to share the throne. She, on the contrary, was the

niece of the famous man who had ruled France and dominated Europe; she was the wife of a great French nobleman; she had been sought in marriage by Charles himself. It thus happened that on his death she was treated with kindness by James II and was even invited to the Court of William III. But, notwithstanding all this, and the fact that her legacy from her uncle had amounted to the enormous sum of two million pistoles, she lived to know distress, and after her death at Chelsea in June, 1699, her body was seized by her creditors. She was then only fifty-two, and seldom can the harpies of the then ridiculous law have become masters of a more personable corpse. The Duchess's old friend St. Evremond never ceased to bemoan his loss, and could not hear his fair friend mentioned without shedding tears. After all, she who had been petted by Mazarin, loved by Charles II, and mourned by St. Evremond, could have been no ordinary woman, and we may profitably forget the coarseness of Rochester in the enthusiasm of Waller.*

The Duchess of Richmond.

At once the most beautiful and the most intellectually feeble of the fair ones who congregated at the Court of Charles II, Frances Stewart

* There is a curious ghost story connected with the Duchess of Mazarine, the details of which are given in Sheppard's *Memorials of St. James's Palace.*

comes before us as a lovely but silly doll, who allowed herself to be made a party to so many indiscretions that it is difficult to know whether to think her a very abandoned young lady or merely a very indiscreet one. The first reference we find to her in Pepys's gossiping record indicates that if not actually criminal she at least did her best to make the world think her so. Captain Ferrers, walking in the Park one day with Pepys and his friend Creed, told them a story of "how Lady Castlemaine, a few days since, had Mrs. Stewart to an entertainment, and at night begun a frolique that they two must be married—and married they were, with ring and all other ceremonies of church service, and ribbands and sack posset in bed, and flinging the stocking; but, in the close, it is said that my Lady Castlemaine, who was the bridegroom, rose, and the King come and took her place." The diarist received confirmation of the story a few days later from another friend, Pickering.

"La Belle Stewart," as she is called in Grammont's memoirs, was born about 1647, and accompanied her mother when the latter came to England in the train of Henrietta Maria in 1662.* The date of Pepys's story is 1663, so that at the time she could only then have been about sixteen!

* Henrietta first came to England in 1660. She subsequently paid a visit to France, and it must therefore have been on her return on this latter occasion that Miss Stewart accompanied the royal party.

According to Anthony Hamilton, the author of the *Memoires du Comte de Grammont*, Lady Castlemaine was not slow to observe the King's *penchant* for the girl. "But," he says, "instead of being alarmed at it she favoured, as far as she was able, this new inclination, whether from an indiscretion common to all those who think themselves superior to the rest of mankind, or whether she designed, by this pastime, to divert the King's attention from the commerce which she held with Jermyn. She was not satisfied with appearing without any degree of uneasiness at a preference which all the Court began to remark: she even affected to make Miss Stewart her favourite, and invited her to all the entertainments she made for the King; and in confidence of her own charms, with the greatest indiscretion, she often kept her to sleep. The King, who seldom neglected to visit the Countess before she arose, seldom failed likewise to find Miss Stewart in bed with her." Another reason for this curious behaviour on the part of Lady Castlemaine might be advanced, although it does not seem to have presented itself to Hamilton, or he was too discreet to hint at it. Count Grammont himself "took notice of this conduct without being able to comprehend it," we are told; and therefore as so acute an observer was in the dark we may regard it as incomprehensible.

This great authority can however tell us what he thought of the young lady. "Her figure," according to him, "was more showy than engaging: it was hardly possible for a woman to have less wit, or more beauty: all her features were fine and regular, but her shape was not good; yet she was slender, straight enough, and taller than the generality of women: she was very graceful, danced well, and spoke French better than her mother-tongue: she was well-bred, and possessed, in perfection, that air of dress which is so much admired, and which cannot be attained unless it be taken when young, in France."

Notwithstanding the insistent court the King paid to her it is now generally recognised that she allowed nothing actually criminal in their relations. Pepys, indeed, tells us how "besotted" Charles had become with her, "getting her into corners, and kissing her to the observation of all the world." If, however, she allowed such, and even greater liberties, denoting as has been remarked unpardonable want of modesty in this passionless coquette, for the time it was as far as the King was permitted to go; and there is no doubt that thwarted desire excited his passion, and produced, it is thought, something more nearly akin to real love than he experienced towards any of his mistresses. One can imagine the fascination of the girl both in the *déshabille* of her chamber, as well as in her riding dress (she was a graceful horsewoman),

" with her hat cocked and a red plume, with her sweet eye, little Roman nose, and excellent *taille*," as Pepys once observed her, and thought her the greatest beauty he had ever seen in his life.

Without wishing to impugn the morals of Miss Stewart, one cannot but help thinking that her virtue was a good deal due to calculation, if so apparently empty-headed a beauty can be supposed capable of calculation. Certain it is that when the Queen was so dangerously ill that her recovery seemed well-nigh impossible, she hoped seriously to occupy the vacant place. But unfortunately for her it did not become vacant, and she was obliged to go on her round of permitting liberties, without according the final favour; of building card castles; of listening to the Mephistophelian promptings of the Duke of Buckingham; or of slighting the real passion of the Earl of Bristol.

There is no doubt that the King's majesty was but the chief of a host of admirers—even Rotier, the royal medallist who perpetuated her features and form as Britannia on one of the coins of the realm, being one. Charles was at his wits' end to know how to overcome her resistance—the resistance it would seem rather of a cold nature than that instigated by the precepts of morality. He was so accustomed to success that he could not understand failure. One might have suggested that perhaps his Majesty was not pleasing to her,

although indeed she took good care not to shew it in her less serious relations with him ; she may have found him an "ugly fellow," as he himself once did on being shewn his portrait. Whatever the reason, she was adamant, and not even the scandal of Charles's Court ever suggested she was anything else, at least for a time.

There appeared at this juncture a new suitor in the person of the Duke of Richmond. He was addicted to the bottle in excess ; he was neither handsome nor particularly fascinating in his manners ; but he was a great nobleman, a distant relative of the King himself, and the King began to be seriously alarmed at the assiduity of one who was in many respects a formidable rival. Charles offered all sorts of inducements to alienate Miss Stewart from the Duke. He would make her a duchess ; he would dismiss Lady Castlemaine and all the rest of his harem ; he would heap estates on her ; he would—yes, it is actually whispered that the idea of divorcing the Queen entered his head. Imagine then the rage and fury of the monarch on being introduced suddenly into her bedroom, where he had been told that she was confined by illness, and discovering his rival seated by the side of her bed, and—well, doing his best to mitigate the rigours of her solitude ! It is said that this was one of the few occasions on which Charles, whose mildness under great provocation, and good breeding in the most

adverse circumstances, were proverbial, (to use a vulgarism) let himself go. The Duke retired under a torrent of abuse and vociferation—retired not only from the chamber but from the Court. But it was a case of *reculer pour mieux sauter*. One night, a stormy one we are told (it could not have been as stormy as the passion which raged in the King's breast when he heard of the exploit), he returned and carried off the lady from the very palace of her royal admirer. Together they fled into the country on horseback, and the next morning were married by the Duke's chaplain.

Another fit of ungovernable fury shook the distracted King, and it was some time before his habitual philosophy came to his aid. He swore he would never see her again. Pepys, who heard the details from his friend Pierce, says: "As he tells it, it is the noblest romance and example of a brave lady that I ever read in my life." Later, from Evelyn, he received a full account of the new-made Duchess's own version of her conduct,* and very improving reading it makes.

The story should end here with the beautiful lady leading henceforth a quiet, retired life, far from the feverish happenings of Courts and secure from the importunities of royal and ennobled tempters. Unfortunately the glare and glitter were too much for this beautiful butterfly.

* See *Diary*, April 26th, 1667.

After a time she returned and was promptly made a lady of the bedchamber to the Queen. Nor does Charles appear to have had reason to regret his forgiving spirit, for, according to his own relation (his Majesty on this occasion had had as much wine as was good for him) to her husband himself, she had accorded him those favours as a wife which she had so consistently denied him as a maid. And in her more advanced years—she died in 1702—she no doubt ruminated on the advantages of a virtue which had procured her a ducal husband without eventually alienating a royal lover.

CHAPTER VIII.

HIS UNTITLED MISTRESSES.

Lucy Walters.

ALTHOUGH it is not improbable that during his long career of gallantry and with the exceptional opportunities his Court afforded Charles could claim as temporary mistresses other titled ladies than the four of whom I have spoken in the last two chapters, they are not sufficiently outstanding to afford material to the scandalous chroniclers of the period, and only one of them is actually mentioned by name, the Lady Byron, daughter of Lord Kilmurrey (Kilmorey) and widow of Peter Warburton, who in 1644 became the wife of the first Lord Byron and some years later the mistress of Charles II while he was abroad.* She died in 1664, and Pepys tells us how she had previously persuaded Charles

* Evelyn records how on December 26th, 1651, at Paris "The King and Duke received the Sacrament first by themselves, ye Lords Biron and Wilmot holding ye long towell all along the altar." Lord Byron was apparently another of the type of complacent husband!

to give her an order for £4,000 worth of plate, but he adds, " Thanks be to God, she died before she had it."

It was while Charles was on the Continent that Lucy Walters, or Barlow, first comes on the scene. She was by all accounts his first mistress. Madame Dunois, in her *Memoirs of the English Court,* thus speaks of this beautiful but abandoned person :—

" The Prince had many mistresses, yet none whom he so tenderly loved as Mrs Barlow, mother to the Duke of Monmouth. She was so perfect a beauty and so charmed and transported the King when he first saw her in Wales* that amidst the misfortunes which disturbed the first years of his life and reign he enjoyed no satisfaction nor pleasure but in loving and being beloved by this charming mistress. This being his first passion, the equipage he allowed her, the care he took to please her, and the complaisance he had for her, were so exceeding great that it made the world believe he had promised her marriage."

I may here interpolate a word or two as to this last phrase. Charles is said not only to have promised her marriage, but actually to have married her. It is true that he himself always

* There is a tradition that Charles went into Wales during his wanderings ; if Madame Dunois's information is correct this would seem to confirm it, but it is probable that the fact of Lucy Walters being a native of Pembrokeshire (Anthony à Wood) may have given rise to the report.

denied this and that Lucy's son, afterwards Duke of Monmouth, also confessed that his father had told him that there was no truth in the reports of such a marriage. On the other hand Fuller, Bishop of Lincoln, often affirmed that he himself had married Charles and Lucy Walters, and an innkeeper at Liège swore that the marriage took place and was consummated in his house, he and his wife being eye and ear witnesses of it.† This assertion can be confirmed to some extent by certain letters of the Princess of Orange, the King's sister, to him in which she refers to Lucy Walters as "your wife." These letters, which are in the Thurloe State Papers, are dated 1655. A passage in one of them runs thus: "Your wife desires me to present her humble duty to you, which is all she can say. I tell her 'tis because she thinks of another husband and does not follow your example of being as constant a wife as you are a husband. 'Tis a frailty, they say is given to the sex, therefore you will pardon her I hope." The passage is a curious one in whatever way you look at it. One cannot but think if the letter be authentic that the Princess had been persuaded of the truth of what she hints, but anyone who would be willing, as she seems to be, to believe in the faithfulness of Charles in such matters might well be too credulous a witness in other respects.

† See Harris's *Life of Charles II.*

The career of Lucy Walters in other ways gives rise to a good many contradictory statements. For instance, as to her birth: James II says she was of a gentleman's family in Wales, and she herself affirmed that her mother had left her an estate worth £1,500 a year; Clarendon states that she was "a private Welshwoman of no good fame though handsome"; and Evelyn makes no bones about calling her "the daughter of some very mean creatures." Whatever the truth may be as to her birth and parentage, Clarendon says that she went to Holland with the express purpose of throwing herself in the way of the notoriously susceptible King. If this was so she had already trafficked with her virtue before she met Charles, and the child she had soon after her first introduction to him, the child who was to become Duke of Monmouth, bore such a likeness to Colonel Robert Sidney, with whom she had lived, that many people (perhaps, like James II, they were interested ones) were convinced he was the fruit of this previous amour.

Her beauty was only equalled by her indiscretion. "Brown, beautiful, bold, but insipid," Evelyn calls her; and while Charles was trying to regain his crown in Scotland she appears to have led a life of pleasure and immorality that had its sequel when on his return to the Continent after the Battle of Worcester he refused to have anything more to do with her in spite of her protes-

S. Harding del.t

H. Van den Berghe. Sculp.

Publd. Octr. 1.1793, by E & S Harding, Pall Mall.

MISS LUCY WATERS,

From an Original Drawing in the Possession of

the Right Honorable the Earl of Bute.

tations and promises of amendment. Perhaps some new charmer had appeared on the scene, or perhaps the King realised that she had become too well known to permit of his resuming relations with her without scandal. Letters concerning her which a Mr. Daniel O'Neile wrote to Charles as late as 1656, and which are preserved by Thurloe, shew what good reason the King had for his action, and also, incidentally, prove, what is shown in other cases, that he remained interested in those with whom he had once had intimate relations. His partiality for the Duke of Monmouth indicates also two things: one, that he believed him to be his own son; the other, that he preserved a tender feeling for that son's mother. In one of the letters referred to, the writer remarks that, "only the consideration of your Majesty has held Monsieur Heenuleit and Monsieur Nertwick" (syndics of The Hague) "not to have her banished this towne and country for an infamous person and by sound of drum," and he adds how "every idle action of hers brings your Majestie upon the stage."

Whether she was eventually banished from Holland or not, certain it is that she is found in London a few months later. No sooner did she arrive, however, than she was thrown into the Tower by Cromwell's orders, and if the evidence of her maid, Ann Hill, who accompanied her and was examined on June 26th, 1656, is to be believed,

she had been lately with the King "a night and a day together," which would seem to show that Charles could not keep away from her in spite of her infidelity and notoriety. She herself, however, swore that she had not seen the King for two years, further stating that a child she had had by him was dead and that the two who were still alive "were by a husband in Holland who was also dead." *

It is a very tangled skein which is, perhaps, not worth unravelment. The lady does not invite belief either by her character or profession; let us say her memory played her false. The evidence of serving-maids—especially those associated with such characters—is, too, notoriously open to question. On the whole it is quite unlikely that a real marriage ever took place: if it did, perhaps the fair one had been married before. We are told that she assumed the name of Barlow. Why? Could it have been that of a husband living but quiescent at the time of Charles's first introduction to her?

Lucy Walters's end was the end of so many *hetairæ*. After her release from the Tower she went to Paris, and there Evelyn saw her living on the rewards of those charms which still held their own in spite of all her varied experiences. What had become of that "estate of £1,500 a year"? She once said that her object in visiting

* Thurloe, quoted by Harris.

England was to "recover it." How then did she lose it? The story is a not unusual one. Her own story was a not unusual one; her wretched and miserable death, "without anything to bury her," was not an unusual one. But somehow she seems even in her disgraceful life and her sad end more attractive than the painted Portsmouth and the disreputable Cleveland bedizened in the trappings of vice and clothed with the rich wages of sin.*

Eleanor Gwynn.

To many, other than those who have made a study of the reign of Charles II or have browsed in the diaries of Evelyn or Pepys, the names of most of the King's mistresses are a dead letter; but everyone has heard of Nell Gwynn. Her name is as famous as any of that period—in a way it is the most famous; and when we think of the Merry Monarch we recall the happy, generous creature, even if for a moment we forget the Clarendon who recorded the history he had helped to make. Nell Gwynn has so caught on to the imagination of the people that her errors are forgotten, her vices extenuated, her example forgiven. She is the one courtesan in history whose private character has triumphed over her unfortunate profession. What she was rises dominant over

* There is a little novel called *The Perplexed Prince*, which pretends to tell of her intercourse with Charles. The curious may like to hunt it up, but it is probably worthless.

what she did. In a way she was little better than Lucy Walters; she cannot be said to have been so good as Jane Roberts; she was no better or worse than Moll Davis; and yet she alone of all these is still capable of appealing to those to whom her profession is anathema and her way of life a stumbling-block. She has been written about in biographies* and novels; she has formed the "motif" of a popular play; but no one has attempted to make a tract out of her frailties, because her frailties have somehow come to be forgotten in her charm, her charity, her innate kindliness. She sings and dances her way through the pages of the social life of Charles's reign with the gay irresponsibility of a sunbeam which has spots and motes in it but which is itself so dazzling that such blemishes are compelled, as it were, to take on its essential beauty. If ever a woman idealized vice it was Nell Gwynn. Perhaps the whole secret lay in the fact that she lived a life of vice without being vicious; by every moral standard she was wicked; yet there was that about her—temperament? character? what you will—which seems somehow to have saved her from the degradation of many a high-born courtesan of the day. Something of the same secret is present in the character of the man with whom her name will be for ever associated. Judged by

* Peter Cunningham's *Story of Nell Gwynn* and Mr. Cecil Chesterton's book with the same title have, I hear while writing this chapter, been added to by a "life" from the pen of Mr. Lewis Melville.

strict rules Charles was a bad man and a bad King, but who thinks of his many sins of omission and commission ? He is the type of the easy-going man of pleasure, and because he was not cruel or vindictive or a hypocrite we forgive him much which in our heart of hearts we know we ought not to. And Nell, the joyous, witty, loose, orange-girl ; we forgive her for her beauty, her charm, her sense of humour, her wit, and her good nature.

The feeling which the English people had at the time for her has descended to us ; and although the moralist will properly find no excuse for her frailty, in that she was a Protestant and an Englishwoman, during her own day those facts militated in her favour, and she was for ever being favourably compared with her rival the Duchess of Portsmouth, who was a foreigner and a Roman, and whose power was regarded as being, as it was, largely exercised to the detriment of the nation whose sovereign she had seduced by her meretricious arts. Add to this the difference in the natures of the two women, and it is not difficult to understand how Nell Gwynn came to be regarded as a sort of privileged person—her calling forgotten, her failings overlooked !

So much has been written about " pretty, witty Nell " that it will only be necessary here quite briefly to say anything about her career, her successes as an actress, her apotheosis as the

King's mistress. As in the case of other illustrious people (Homer among them) various cities have contended for the honour of being Nell's birth-place, and whether she was born in Pipe Lane, Hereford, or in the Coal Yard, London, or at Oxford, is a moot point, although the first-named, where Garrick was born, is favoured by most investigators.* If her father really could claim ancient descent and was besides a captain in the army, he must have come on bad days, because he also seems to have been a fruiterer in Covent Garden. Of her mother practically nothing is known but that she, later, lived near the Neat Houses at Chelsea, and there fell into the river and was drowned, not without a suspicion that this was one of the few occasions on which she mixed water with liquid of a more spirituous character.

Wherever she was born and whatever her parentage was, one thing is clear: Nell Gwynn began her life not only in humble but vicious surroundings and passed much of her youth in the purlieus of Drury Lane, being on her own showing brought up in a tavern to fill strong waters for gentlemen. It was probably while thus engaged that her sparkling eyes and witty tongue attracted the attention of Mrs. Ross, a celebrated procuress of the day, into whose hands she fell.

* Her horoscope may be seen among the MSS. in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. It is supposed that it may be the work of the famous astrologer, Lilly.

From this to being orange-girl at the playhouses and attracting the notice both of the actors and patrons of the theatre was but a step, and Nell, whose natural gifts combined with a pretty face were her stock-in-trade, found little difficulty in passing from the front of the curtain to the back. To say she became an actress would be less accurate than to say she was born one—not one destined to reach the highest rung of the Thespian ladder, but at least to climb it sufficiently to become for a time the talk of the town. She indeed played from very early years a double *rôle*, that of keeping some men happy and many men and women amused, for she first appeared on the stage in 1667 (she was then just seventeen); and she had already shared her favours with Hart and Lacy, the actors, when she became the acknowledged mistress of Lord Buckhurst (afterwards Earl of Dorset). At that time she was performing in Killigrew's Company at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Pepys had first met her two years before, when he sat next to her and Rebecca Marshall at the King's House on April 3rd, the play being Lord Orrery's *Mustapha*; and in his diary are very frequent allusions to her when she had become an actress and was charming the town by her *espiéglerie*, her dancing, and her pretty face.

It was while she was under the protection of Lord Buckhurst, with whom she went to live from

her lodgings in Drury Lane,* that Pepys once saw her standing at her door watching the milkmaids dancing on May-day in 1667, and with Buckhurst she kept open house at Epsom, whither her admirer had taken her. Towards the end of the August of that year, however, she returned to London, and was again performing at the theatre in Drury Lane, where Pepys records seeing her act Cydaria in Dryden's *The Indian Emperor*, a part which was too serious for her, and which the diarist considered "she did basely." Four days later he was again at the play and heard from Orange Moll that "Nell is already left by my Lord Buckhurst, and that he makes sport of her." Indeed, poor Nell's prospects just then looked anything but rosy. "Hart," Pepys continues, "her great admirer, now hates her . . . she is very poor, and hath lost my Lady Castlemaine who was her good friend also; but she is come to the house, but is neglected by them all." This may, however, have been but jealous gossip, for certain it is that Nell was playing in other parts during the year—mostly serious parts, which she disliked and consequently acted badly, and which Hart made her perform probably in order to bring her into discredit. However, the quarrel was apparently made up, for in December she was acting with

* She occupied a house in the fashionable (Strand) end of the thoroughfare, where such people as the Earls of Anglesey and Clare and Craven also resided in those days.

Hart in *All Mistaken, or the Mad Couple*, in which, as Mirida, she scored an instant success.

As we shall see, the King had already been attracted by Moll Davis, whose singing of the song "My lodging it is on the cold ground" carried her to a lodging in Suffolk Street, when Pepys hears from Mrs. Knipp the actress (he heard everything) that "the King had sent several times for Nelly." This did not indicate that Miss Davis's charms had already begun to pall, as at this very time she was said to be leaving the Duke's Theatre for her new West-end abode, adorned with the £600 ring which Charles had given her and which she was never tired of publicly exhibiting. But the King loved variety, and to his seraglio he determined to add one who by her artless amusing ways was a welcome change from Lady Castlemaine, who was always quarrelling with him, and the Duchess of Portsmouth, who never forgot the political motives which had thrown her into his arms.

At first Nell's visits to Whitehall seem to have been in the nature of flying ones, and she was as assiduous in her theatrical engagements as she had ever been; but in the spring of 1670 a new play by Dryden, in which she was to take part, had to be postponed on account of her absence, and in the Epilogue to *The Conquest of Granada* (the play in question) Dryden amusingly refers to the circumstances of the postponement as due

to the fact that "the women were away" (he indicates not only Nell but Moll Davis, too, as being unwell), and he adds significantly: "In one such sickness nine whole months were lost."

The birth of a child was indeed Nell's good reason for non-appearance, and that child's father was the King. The young lady who was by now a full-fledged mistress of Charles, had apartments in a house in Lincoln's Inn Fields,* and there on May 8th, 1670, was born the boy who was later created Duke of St. Albans. About the same time Louise de Keroualle (afterwards Duchess of Portsmouth) arrived in England, and she and Nell Gwynn became outstanding rivals in the affections of the Merry Monarch.

Shortly afterwards Nell removed from Lincoln's Inn Fields to a house on the north side of Pall Mall, and in the following year obtained from the King one on the south side whose gardens abutted on those of St. James's Palace, which then extended along part of what is now The Mall. The well-known story is that Charles presented his favourite with a lease of the property but that she threw it in his face, saying that she wanted a freehold—which she got. Hence No. 79, Pall Mall, which

* This I imagine was Lindsay House (now Nos. 59 and 60) which the Rate Books for 1700 shew to have belonged to the Earl of Dorset (Nell's first protector—she called him her Charles 1st !) and although he had broken with her he may have allowed her to retain rooms in the mansion. Certainly The Survey of London volume on Lincoln's Inn Fields does not record Nell as the possessor or inhabitant of any other house in this quarter.

has since those days been twice rebuilt, is the only freehold on the south side of the thoroughfare which is otherwise Crown property.

It was when attending the King on one of his walks in the palace grounds that Evelyn records hearing "a very familiar discourse between (the King) and Mrs. Nellie, as they cal'd an impudent comedian, she looking out of her garden on a terrace at the top of the wall and (the King) standing on ye greene walke under it. I was heartily sorry at this scene. Thence the King walked to the Dutchesse of Cleveland, another lady of pleasure and curse of our nation." The diarist has left the words in brackets blank, but there is no doubt who is indicated, in fact the context proves it, and Ward, the artist, made his famous picture out of the incident.

One can well imagine the feelings of grave men at the King's behaviour, and Evelyn voiced the sentiments of a large portion of the nation. At the same time, of all Charles's mistresses Nell Gwynn was the least rapacious and the least hurtful to the country at large, and, putting the morality of the whole matter aside, one could have wished that the King had confined his favours to such as she. The attitude of the general public towards her can be estimated by the story of how on one occasion her coach was stopped by a mob under the impression that it contained her rival, the Duchess of Portsmouth, unpopular both

as a foreigner and a Roman Catholic, when Nell putting her head out of the window exclaimed: "Good people, be civil; I am the Protestant whore"; while a goldsmith of the period once related how, having made a service of plate at the King's order for the Duchess of Portsmouth, great numbers of people crowded his shop to see it and unanimously wished it had been for Nell Gwynn instead. Indeed, the "Protestant mistress" became a sort of idol of the people, and there is no doubt that this association of the popular form of worship with worship of a very different description was largely responsible for Nell's popularity. Everything Popish was anathema to the people, and therefore they could forgive even her profession in view of the fact that she was of their own faith. Once there was a report that she had 'verted, and Evelyn notices it, but there was no truth in the statement.

There is no doubt that she received many and rich presents from Charles, but the "Secret Service Moneys" records for the reign do not indicate any amount comparable with what many of the King's other enchantresses—particularly that leech the Duchess of Cleveland—obtained from him. She was presented with the house in Pall Mall, and some country places, her sons were ennobled, and she had a grant of arms, while, no doubt, the King made her a suitable allowance, although the fact that on his death-bed he besought

his brother not to let her starve indicates that he realised that she was not opulent.

The story connected with the granting of a title to Nell's eldest son is well known. Being with the King on one occasion she called the boy to her by saying, " Come here, you little bastard ; " and at Charles's remonstrances she added, " I have no better name to give him," a hint that was at once taken by the King, who created the child Baron of Headington and Earl of Burford—titles subsequently merged in the greater one of Duke of St. Albans. Nell's second son by the King was born on Christmas Day, 1671, and was known as Lord James Beauclerk for the eleven years during which he lived.

As I have said, Nell was amply, but not ostentatiously, provided for by her royal lover. She had a house at Windsor in which the staircase was painted by Verrio ; but chiefly she resided in the adequate but small mansion in Pall Mall, where she was fond of giving concerts and where, on one occasion, the King having no money to bestow on the performers whom he had heartily applauded, and the Duke of York only a guinea or two, Nell exclaimed, using the King's favourite expletive : " 'Od's fish ! What company am I got into ? "

That much of her popularity arose from her charitable disposition is unquestionable. She was always ready to help needy ones (especially actors and actresses) ; she is known to have given

money for the poor prisoners in Whitecross Jail; and if it was not due to her sympathetic suggestion that Chelsea Hospital arose for the alleviation of the declining days of old soldiers, as was originally thought, we may be sure that it was just one of those charitable objects which would have appealed to her kindly nature, and that she sympathised fully with the project. Of all Charles's mistresses she was the only one whose fidelity to him has never been called in question, and to the day of his death he regarded her with an affectionate regard which not many of her rivals were able to awaken. From mere sensual gratification she raised his love to a higher plane, and his last words attest his thought for her future welfare.

Nell Gwynn did not survive Charles long. He died on February 6th, 1685, of what was termed apoplexy (but which has been thought by many competent judges to have been poison); she died of apoplexy on November 14th, 1687, being buried in the church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, near the spot where Pepys had seen her at her door and not far from those purlieus whence she had passed through squalor, vice and her tawdry Thespian trappings to a palace and a king's embraces. Tenison, then Vicar of St. Martin's, preached her funeral sermon, and at a later period the act was made by Viscount Villiers* the reason

* It is amusing in this connection to remember that this gentleman was said to be son-in-law of the notorious pander, Will Chiffinch.

for urging Queen Mary II to veto Tenison's election as Bishop of Lincoln. "I have heard as much," replied the Queen, "and this is a sign that the poor unfortunate woman died penitent, for if I have read a man's heart through his looks, had she not made a truly pious end the Doctor could never have been induced to speak well of her." Another royal lady was not so liberal-minded, for when Queen Charlotte was once asked if she remembered a portrait of Nell Gwynn which was known to have formed part of the collection at Windsor, she replied tartly: "that most assuredly since *she* had resided at Windsor there had been no Nell Gwynn there."

Somehow one thinks that when the great reckoning comes, there will be more to rise up and say a good word for merry, vicious, charitable, repentant Nell than for one who never experienced temptation because Nature had preserved her from the means of incurring it, and whose harsh austerity wrapped her round and made her impervious to the promptings of generosity and forgiveness.

Mary (Moll) Davis.

Mrs. Pierce, in conversation with Mr. Secretary Pepys, once called Miss* Mary Davis a "most impertinent slut," which to do her justice was

* At that time "Miss" was used only by women of a certain character, unmarried girls of respectability being termed "Mistress" (Mrs.).

neither more nor less than the truth. I have said before how it was by her singing of a song in *The Mad Shepherdess* that she captivated the susceptible heart of Charles. That she was a pretty girl goes without saying ; that her singing—especially when she was given so pathetic and charming a song as " My lodging is on the cold ground "—was effective is equally certain ; but at least, on the authority of Pepys, it was her dancing which differentiated her from many of her fellow actresses and was superior even to that of Nell Gwynn herself.

She seems to have been a natural daughter of the first Earl of Berkshire, some say of a blacksmith near the Howards' estate of Charlton, in Wiltshire, others of the Earl's son Colonel Howard. The essential thing so far as we are concerned is that she became a member of the troupe attached to The Duke's House, as it was called, and that she was one of the actresses who lodged in the house of Sir William Davenant, the playwright and director of the theatre. Her first appearance on any stage took place in 1664, when she acted in a play called *The Stepmother*. Pepys, who saw her on several occasions, is enthusiastic about her dancing. Thus, on March 7th, 1667, he witnessed the performance of *The English Princess, or Richard the Third*, which he found " a most sad melancholy play "—" only," he adds, " little Miss Davis did dance a jig at the end of the play . . . . in boy's

clothes, and the truth is there is no comparison between Nell's dancing the other day at the King's house in boy's clothes and this, this being infinitely beyond the other." Again, in the following August he sees her in *Love's Trickes*, a silly play, he thinks, " only Miss Davis's dancing in a shepherd's clothes did please us mightily."

Charles had no sooner observed her than he desired her, and as to want was with him to have—the result was a foregone conclusion. Mrs. Knipp, who was like an oracle to Pepys in matters theatrical—and delicate—told him (on January 11, 1668) that " Miss Davis is for certain going away from the Duke's house, the King being in love with her " ; how " a house is taken for her and is furnishing "—it was in Suffolk Street, and Pepys, happening to be passing one day, subsequently, saw her stepping into her " mighty fine coach "—and how " she hath a ring given her already, worth £600."

The King's attention inflamed the easily aroused jealousy of Lady Castlemaine, and we hear of her being out of humour and not smiling during a certain performance of a play, as the King had eyes for no one but the new favourite ; and once when Miss Davis was in a box above the King's and kept looking down on him and he up at her, Lady Castlemaine, observing it, " looked like fire." Even the long-suffering Queen shewed her anger when the young lady danced one of

her jigs at a play given at Whitehall, by rising and leaving the apartment. Nell Gwynn herself seems to have taken the King's new infidelity in a very commonsense way : she looked no daggers, she was as smiling and witty as ever, and, if report be true, she actually administered a cordial to Miss Davis on the night she was to be first admitted to the royal private apartments !

Although Burnet states that Mary Davis did not keep her hold on Charles's affections long, it is a fact that she had a daughter by him four years after their first introduction to each other, the girl being called Mary Tudor and being in 1687 married to Edward Radclyffe, later second Earl of Derwentwater, thus becoming the mother of the Jacobite third Earl who was executed after the Rebellion of 1715.

It is rather singular that nothing further is known about Mary Davis: she disappears as suddenly from Charles's Court as she entered it ; she sang and danced her way into royal favour, and the act being over she fades away behind the garish scenery.

Jane Roberts.

It is from the pages of Burnet's *History of His Own Times* that we glean what little we know about Jane Roberts, another of Charles's mistresses and one who seems, so far as we can judge from the bishop's remarks, to have been differen-

tiated from all those who ministered to the King's pleasures while following their own inclinations. There is indeed a mention of her name in Grammont's *Memoirs*, where she is bracketed with Lady Castlemaine, Lady Chesterfield, Lady Shrewsbury, Mrs. Middleton, Miss Brook, "and a thousand others," as being among that galaxy of beauty and frailty which at once adorned and disgraced the Court of Charles II.

She would seem to have been one of those unfortunate girls whose beauty is their worst endowment. Beauty in those days (and not only in those days) had a habit of being this. Most of those, however, who were attracted to Whitehall went with a more or less fixed purpose—it may have been greed, love of luxury, political incitement, what you will; some were seduced thither by intrigue, false promises, the glitter of the Court, or the Paphian divinity that hedged the King about. Whatever the motives or the reasons, once within the orbit of that hotbed of vice few escaped contamination, few were able to preserve an unsullied virtue.

Among these was Jane Roberts. "Her first education," says Burnet, "had so deep a root that tho' she fell into many scandalous disorders, with very dismal adventures in them all, yet a principle of religion was so deep laid in her, that tho' it did not restrain her, yet it kept alive in her such a constant horror at sin that she was never

easy in an ill course, and died with a great sense of her former ill life."

She appears to have been the daughter of a clergyman, but where she came from, in what way she was first introduced to Charles, or how long she remained his mistress, are among the mysteries. It would be interesting if the "Mr. Roberts —a priest," mentioned by Bishop Cartwright in his diary, could be proved to have been the frail lady's parent; and equally interesting, indeed more probable, if we can connect a certain "Carola Roberts," whose name appears in the Secret Service Expenses of Charles II, as being a daughter of Jane Roberts by the King. Again, as affording the few gleams of light we get on Miss Roberts's personality, we must turn to Burnet: "Mrs. Roberts, whom the King had kept for some time," he writes, "sent for me when she was dying: I saw her often for some weeks, and among other things I desired her to write a letter to the King, expressing the sense she had of her past life: And at her desire I drew such a letter as might be fit for her to write: But she never had strength enough to write it." Burnet, however, was not the man to lose an opportunity of this sort, and so he himself indited a letter to Charles full of admonishments, which, however, he had reason to know was of little avail, since Lord Arran was by the King when he read it and afterwards told Burnet that when he had done so he threw it into the fire.

The bishop's last reference to Miss Roberts appears under date of 1681, so it is probable that she died in that year.

Mary Knight.

Among the few letters which Nell Gwynn is known to have written (the truth is she was painfully illiterate) is one to Lawrence Hyde, afterwards Earl of Rochester, which is conjecturally dated August, 1678. It only interests us here in that it contains an allusion to Mrs. Knight, whose mother is reported to have then recently died. Mrs. Knight herself was famous as a singer, and Pepys mentions going with his friend Pelling to Gray's Inn Fields, "thinking to have heard Mrs. Knight singing at her lodgings." They were, however, too late, and so, adds the Diarist, "we must try another time." This was in 1667. One does not know if he succeeded, certainly a year later he had not done so, for he still remarks that he must endeavour to hear her. He must certainly have missed a good deal, for even so competent a judge as Evelyn speaks of her as having an incomparable voice, and adds that "she has doubtless the greatest reache of any woman in England." He further remarks (1674) that she had been lately in Italy, and had much improved "in that quality." She was indeed a famous singer, as he calls her, and was often at Court in this capacity.

But she had other merits in the King's eyes, and if she came to Whitehall for one reason she often remained for another. According to a lampoon of the period she it was who was employed by Charles in his first negotiations with Nell Gwynn, and the story goes that Lord Buckhurst, under whose protection Nell then was, would not give her up until he had been reimbursed for what he had already expended on her. It would thus seem that Mary Knight preceded Nell Gwynn in Charles's favour, and indeed she is reported to have been his mistress in 1667, in which year the former was much at Epsom with Buckhurst, as we have seen. If Charles gave her up on the appearance of her friendly rival it was but temporarily, for Pepys in a letter to Lord Brouncker, dated March 13th, 1682, refers to Mrs. Knight as being "better," and adds "the King takes his repose there once or twice daily." This may probably merely indicate that Charles went to hear her sing—or swear, for we are told that she was as adept at the latter accomplishment as she was at the former.

There is extant a portrait of Mrs. Knight by Kneller. In it she is portrayed in mourning and in an attitude of prayer. But the picture was evidently executed when the fire of youth had left her, and if its composition suggests repentance she and Jane Roberts may be bracketed together as the only two of Charles's mistresses

who seem to have shewn any. After all, she did something more than minister to a King's passion, for she charmed a generation by her voice, and even the strict Evelyn under its magic influence refrains from reprobating her other achievements.

Among Charles's other mistresses may be mentioned Winifred Wells, Elizabeth Killigrew, Catherine Peg, and the lady who became Lady Shannon. I shall have something to say of Miss Wells later on. Elizabeth Killigrew* was no doubt a member of the family well known at the Court of Charles II, but to whom contemporary allusions do not appear to be forthcoming. Catherine Peg and Lady Shannon are equally shadowy personages, whose names appear fitfully in the chronicles of the Court but who have left otherwise no mark on their times—their beauty was apparently their sole credential.

In the *Personal History of Charles II* a list is given of those mistresses of the King by whom he is known to have had children, and I give it here as appropriately rounding off the account of those with whom he passed so much of his time.

By Lucy Walters he had James, Duke of Monmouth, who was born at Rotterdam in 1649; also a daughter, Mary, who married first William Sarsfield, and secondly William Fanshaw. By Lady Castlemaine, afterwards Duchess of Cleve-

* She is of course not to be confounded with Ann Killigrew, a very different character.

land, he had six children : Charles Fitzroy, Duke of Southampton (born 1662) ; Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton (born 1663) ; George Fitzroy, Duke of Northumberland (born 1665) ; Charlotte Fitzroy, married to Sir Edward Lee of Ditchley, Oxfordshire; perhaps the Countess of Sussex, wife of Thomas Lennard, created Earl of Sussex in 1674; and Barbara, who became a nun at Pontoise. By Nell Gwynn he had Charles Beauclerk, Duke of St. Albans (born 1670), and James Beauclerk, who died young. By the Duchess of Portsmouth he had Charles Lennox, Duke of Richmond (born 1672). By Mary Davis he had Mary Tudor, married to Lord Radclyffe, son and heir of the Earl of Derwentwater, who succeeded as second Earl in 1696. By Catherine Peg he had Charles FitzCharles, who died at Tangier, and a daughter who died in infancy. By Elizabeth Lady Shannon he had Charlotte Boyle, or Fitzroy, married first to James Howard, grandson of the Earl of Suffolk, and secondly to Sir William Paston, Bart., who succeeded his father as second Earl of Yarmouth in 1683.

Besides these, Charles had natural children by others of whom no such record has been kept. The list given is, however, a goodly one, and when on the King being addressed by a local magnate as the " father of his people," Rochester murmured " Of a good many of them," we can realise that he had excellent reasons for his witty " aside."

CHAPTER IX.

HIS OTHER FAVOURITES, ETC.

APART from Charles the Second's recognised mistresses there was a number of fair ladies who graced or disgraced his Court by their presence, whose smiles and favours were pretty well distributed among the wits and beaux who congregated about Whitehall and who found there at once their profit and pleasure. In the amazing record of Count Anthony Hamilton you may not only read their names but may become acquainted with all kinds of mysterious circumstances which occurred in connection with them, and which were often not long in reaching the ears of Mr. Samuel Pepys, or in shocking those of Mr. John Evelyn.

There was, for instance, Mrs. Middleton, one of the handsomest women in London and "so much of a coquette as to discourage no one, and so anxious to appear magnificently that she was ambitious to vie with them of the greatest fortune." Her indolent languishing air has been portrayed

by Lely,* and her well-made, fair and delicate form praised by so great a judge as Grammont, who was first attracted by her sentimental style of beauty. Beautiful she must have been to have secured the enthusiastic suffrages of three such various judges as Grammont, Evelyn and Pepys. But she was as frail as she was fair—a malady incident to most of the lovely ladies who frequented the unhallowed purlieus of Whitehall, and her name was not for nothing associated in the lampoons of the day with those of Lawrence Hyde, afterwards Earl of Rochester, Ralph Montagu, who later became a duke, Richard Jones, subsequently Lord Ranelagh, and others, not omitting James, Duke of York. The seraphic vision of Miss Hamilton, one of the few unstained beauties of the Court, effectually drove Mrs. Middleton out of Grammont's affections; and the lady, whose husband nobody has ever heard of (another not unusual circumstance connected with Charles's Court), who was later to figure in the salon of the Duchess of Mazarine, lives now but by the brush of Lely, the courtly verse of St. Evremond and, less satisfactorily, in the grossness of the satire entitled *Cullen with his Flock of Misses*.†

In the glamour spread by Charles's character as a rake that of his brother has become somewhat

* The lineaments of many of these ladies have been reproduced in Mr. Jameson's *Beauties of the Court of Charles II.*

† This, with much other contemporary verse dealing with Charles's Court, is to be found in *State Poems*, 4 vols., 1702.

obscured; but as a matter of fact James, Duke of York, was almost as inveterate a pursuer of women as was the King and as, for the matter of that, were most of the men who constituted the Court of the Merry Monarch. Charles once said that his brother's mistresses were so ugly that he thought he must have taken them as so many penances at the direction of his confessor. This sweeping generality was unfair at least to many of those to whom James paid such marked attention as to excite the talk of the town. The portraits of Lady Robarts, of whom he was a professed admirer, shew her to have been equal in beauty to most of the *habituées* of Whitehall; indeed, even the critical Grammont calls her charms striking, although he did not personally find her attractive. Her husband, an old, snarling, peevish fellow, was quite alive to the interest she had excited in the heir to the throne, and in spite of all sorts of temptations which ambition or love of money could suggest refused absolutely, in the words of Anthony Hamilton—"to become a cuckold," eventually carrying off his fair property to the fastnesses of Wales.

James was not the man, however, to bewail for long the loss of one *inamorata* when so many more were available, and he turned his attention to the Lady Chesterfield of the large blue eyes and faultless figure. Her husband, the second Earl, appears to have been one of those men who,

immoral themselves, cannot understand immorality in others; and although it is not confirmed that he had any actual reason for believing his wife guilty, he had only too much for regarding her indiscreet to the last degree. No more complacent than Lord Robarts, he too removed his spouse, with her famous green* stockings, to the seclusion of the Derbyshire hills out of harm's way.†

A lady who did actually become the mistress of the Duke of York was that Lady Denham, the wife of Denham the poet, whose tragic end has thrown the gravest suspicion on her husband and has never been satisfactorily cleared up. She had been a Miss Brooke (Grammont spells it Brook) and was first introduced to the Court of Charles by her uncle the Earl of Bristol, together with her beautiful sister Frances. Bristol, who was anxious to advance himself, is said to have made use of his two lovely nieces to further his designs, and in the case of the elder he so far succeeded as to throw her almost simultaneously into the arms of the poet as a husband and into those of the royal duke as a lover. Like Lady Robarts and Lady Chesterfield she found the former not only an encumbrance but a jealous and suspicious one, and she herself—as did the world at large—believed her death to be due to poison. Pepys tells

* She wore stockings of this colour, and once during a discussion on legs the Duke of York said no legs were worth anything without green stockings.

† Where he is said to have killed her by causing poisoned wine to be administered to her for the Sacrament.

us that the Duke of York was accustomed to follow her about "like a dog," and that she refused to be his mistress as Miss Price the Maid of Honour was, *i.e.*, "to go up and down the Privy stairs," but would be owned publicly, and was.

James went further in the case of another Court lady, Lady Bellasyse, for in her case after the death of his first wife he actually handed her a contract of marriage—a document she on one occasion produced, with the result that its publicity drew down on its author a vigorous reprimand from his brother the King. Lady Bellasyse possessed so little beauty—a portrait of her as St. Catherine confirms this—that she may well have been one of those alluded to by Charles as a penance.

Yet another of those to whom the Duke paid more than ordinary attention was Lady Southesk, who was as frail as she was fair, for we are told that she passed through several hands before coming into those of her royal lover. Her husband was Lord Carnegie, who succeeded to the title of Southesk while he was away from London. Returning one day he found the Duke of York with his wife, and De Grammont tells an amusing story of how Dick Talbot, a very *preux chevalier* but not without reproach among the ladies, keeping guard outside the chamber and forgetting that Carnegie and Southesk were now the same, actually told the infuriated husband that the Duke

was with his wife. Southesk's form of revenge was perhaps characteristic. He did not realise that this occurrence had determined James to discontinue his amour, and so, to quote Count Hamilton: "He went to the most infamous places to seek the most infamous disease," which he destined to be communicated to his wife's lover. Even the grave Burnet records the unsavoury episode, although it is only fair to the Earl to add that he strenuously denied the truth of the story.

As my purpose here is rather to indicate the general character of the Court of Charles II than to particularise all those who helped to form it, it is unnecessary to enlarge on the variety of other ladies who hovered round the King and his courtiers. There were many who gave themselves up to a life of pleasure and gaiety, who were frivolous and indiscreet, but who were, as they used to say, honest. Mary Villiers, Duchess of Richmond, who had at this time, however, passed the meridian of her beauty, was one of these; but she had a passion for intrigue, and in taking Nell Gwynn's side in her quarrel with the Duchess of Portsmouth is even said to have acted the part of a would-be pander to Charles's pleasures, introducing a relative, Miss Lawson, to his Court, with the hope that that bashful young lady would supplant the foreign interloper. She was, too, rather addicted to the use of strong waters, if we are to believe a scurrilous set of verses of which

Rochester is said to have been the author. But Rochester's effusions* of this character must be taken *cum grano*, and the word "brandy" was a useful rhyme in the line he was writing.

Another lady who mixed with the gay throng and was not averse from those intrigues, not necessarily of an amatory character, to which Court life gave rise was Mary Fairfax, daughter of the famous Parliamentary leader, who at the age of nineteen became the wife of the profligate Duke of Buckingham of all people and who too of all people appears to have acted as a decent if not exactly a faithful husband. Certainly Brian Fairfax in his life of the Duke says that they "lived lovingly and decently together," although, he adds, "she patiently bore with those faults in him which she could not remedy." She was apparently so short that we are told that when she stood upon her feet you would have thought she was on her knees, and old Lady de Longueville afterwards described her as "a little round crumpled woman, very fond of finery."

Then there was "silly" Miss Temple, afterwards Lady Littleton, who figures in an indecent story in Grammont's Memoirs, and who first came to Court at a very tender if not innocent age. There was, too, at Whitehall at this time a certain Miss Hobart, whose propensities were of a Lesbian

* It is doubtful if Rochester penned many of the verses attributed to him.

character and who was the heroine (if such an epithet in such a connection may be used) of the story in question. Another of these "Maids of Honour," as they may humourously be termed, was Miss Price; and it is difficult to say, and not at all profitable to speculate as to what extent these and others were favourable to the disordered habits of Miss Hobart. It is sufficient to indicate such happenings as shedding additional light on the organised immorality of a Court where good name was really only synonymous with lack of virtue, and honesty and discretion were regarded as hopeless encumbrances.

The Miss Price to whom I have already incidentally alluded and who bulks largely in Grammont's Memoirs, was one of the Maids of Honour to the Duchess of York, in which capacity she attracted the notice of the Duke. She is described as having more wit than beauty, and one of her characteristics was a curiosity regarding other people's love affairs—a failing which led her into several scrapes and caused her to be unmercifully satirized by Lord Rochester. Grammont relates the circumstances of a quarrel she had with Miss Blague, another joyous young lady whose eyes were called "marcassins" (from wild boars' eyes) and who intrigued and quarrelled with the Marquis de Brisacier, a French visitor to the Court. Grammont's stories, however, have a habit of being prodigiously long and involved

although undoubtedly piquant, so I must refer the curious reader to his pages for the one in question.

In a different category from Miss Price were such young ladies as Miss Levingston, Miss Fielding and Miss Gibbs, "a silly country girl" whom Jermyn afterwards married. I say in a different category for the sufficient reason that Grammont says they little deserve to be mentioned in his pages, and we may be quite sure that if they had done anything scandalous he would have regarded them as quite worthy to be noticed. He by no means says the same thing of another trio—Miss Boynton, Miss Winifred Wells, and Miss Kirk, known to the gay Frenchman as Miss Warmestré, under which name she figures in his *chronique scandaleuse.*

Miss Boynton, one of the Queen's Maids of Honour, was, according to Grammont, slender and delicate with a good complexion and large motionless eyes, who looked better at a distance than near to. She was affected in her manner and was known as the "languishing Boynton," and when she was not lisping she seems to have been indulging in fainting fits on the least provocation. Pepys mentions her as being very sea-sick on the occasion of the launching of the "Royal Catherine," and having designs on tall, handsome Dick Talbot, she continued to swoon on his account, being ready—so Grammont rather coarsely puts it—"to expose the delicacy of her constitution

to whatever might happen in order to become his wife." Become his wife she did, and as he was afterwards made Earl of Tyrconnel she enjoyed a title which might have been borne by La Belle Hamilton or Miss Jennings, for whose hands Talbot had successively sued. In the case of the latter Talbot was later to have his way. She married first George Hamilton, but on his death and on that of the first Lady Tyrconnel (Miss Boynton) she consented to wed her earlier lover, who later became a duke. She was the sister of the more famous Sarah Duchess of Marlborough, and in after days, falling on bad times, set up a glove shop in the Royal Exchange and was known for a time as "The White Milliner," from her habit of wearing an uncoloured mask in her business hours.

Winifred Wells was remarkable for her fine figure, her exquisite dressing and a way of walking superbly rather than for actual beauty of face, although Pepys, who once met her at dinner at Tom Chiffinch's, speaks of her as a great beauty. But Pepys was rather inclined to be dazzled by Court satellites and he even found her "a woman of pretty conversation," whereas Grammont regarded her talk as insipid. The point of view is everything—and there may have been something of truth in both verdicts. Perhaps she was not so beautiful as Pepys thought her nor so dull as did Grammont.

It is generally supposed that Miss Wells was numbered among the royal mistresses; the fact is highly probable; in any case she, from one cause or another—and a curious one has been hinted at by Buckingham in a couplet he made at the time—did not hold that "exalted" position long, and she is now chiefly remembered as the supposed heroine of a story which Pepys records, not without gusto:—

"Captain Ferrers," he writes, "tells me among other Court passages how about a month ago at a ball at Court a child was dropped by one of the ladies in dancing, but nobody knew who, it being taken up by somebody in their handkerchief. The next morning all the Ladies of Honour appeared early at Court, for their vindication, so that nobody could tell whose mischance this should be. But it seems Mrs. Wells fell sick that afternoon and hath disappeared ever since, so it is concluded it is hers." But this was not all. A few days later the Diarist learns from another friend the following amazing sequel: "Mr. Pickering tells me the story is very true of a child being dropped at a ball at Court, and that the King had it in his closet a week after and did dissect it, and making great sport of it said that in his opinion it must have been a month and three hours old, and that whatever others think he hath the greatest loss (it being a boy as he says) that hath lost a subject by the business." As the

general opinion was that Charles was the actual father, this incident helps to throw a fresh and hardly a pleasant light on his character. We know he was particularly interested in scientific and physiological investigations, but even this is scarcely a sufficient reason under the circumstances for this particular investigation into the *arcana* of anatomy.

The Miss Kirk, who figures in Grammont's pages as Miss Warmestré (why, has never been satisfactorily stated), was another of the Maids of Honour who belied their name and actually gave birth to a child *coram publico*—or at least *coram* Whitehall. Lord Taaffe, an acknowledged admirer of the young lady, was accused by the indignant Queen of being the father, a fact he strenuously denied. The "maid of honour," less fortunate than other titled ladies who so often found themselves in a like situation, was dismissed from the Court with a contumely that only once more proves the correctness of the saying that one person may steal a horse while another may not open the stable door.

Before the catastrophe occurred Miss Warmestré was accustomed to have little supper-parties in her apartments at which Grammont was a frequent guest, but the governess of the Maids of Honour always made a point of being there, at least for a time, out of respect for *les convenances*—a rather amusing word to use in

connection with Whitehall in those days. Grammont's pages indicate a more material reason, however: "The good old lady," it appears, "was particularly fond of oysters and had no aversion to Spanish wine: she was certain of finding at every one of these suppers two barrels of oysters, one to be eaten at the party and the other for her to carry away; as soon, therefore, as she had taken her dose of wine she took her leave of the company"; so that her respect for appearances had its gastronomic limits.

During the period of her Court life Miss Warmestré had been sought in marriage by a cousin of Killigrew's, a Sir Thomas Vernon, but systematically refused her suitor; when he heard of her escapade, however, so far from feeling any disgust, he renewed his attentions and was accepted, the pair becoming, we are told, one of the happiest couples in England. The lady's fascination was apparently rather in her manners and expression than in either beauty of face or figure, for we are further informed that "she had no shape at all . . . but a very lively complexion, very sparkling eyes, and tempting looks, which spared nothing that might engage a lover and promised everything that could preserve him." Grammont had been equally attracted by her and by Mrs. Middleton on his first arriving in London, but the superior charms of Miss Hamilton triumphed over those of her rivals.

It is interesting to remember that Miss Warmestré, or Kirk, had a sister Diana, who became the wife of Aubrey de Vere, the twentieth Earl of Oxford, with whom that great family came to an end in the male line. They had one daughter, who married Charles Beauclerk, first Duke of St. Albans, the natural son of Charles II by Lucy Walters. Before her marriage this young lady's reputation was on much the same plane as that of her sister, if we are to go by a contemporary lampoon entitled *Queries and Answers from Garraway's Coffee-house,* preserved in the volume of *State Poems* to which reference has already been made. For we read there the following :—

Q. How often had Mrs. Kirk sold her daughter Di before the Lord of Oxford married her ?

A. Ask the Prince and Harry Jermyn.

Short, but pregnant.

. . . . . .

Concerning the men who formed the less decorative portion of Charles's Court it is difficult in a limited space to say anything adequate. There are so many who properly claim extended notice, so many who indeed have their place in the annals of the country's literature, as well as in the more local society of Whitehall and St. James's, that were their lives and sayings to be dealt with fully a large volume in itself would be the result. In the case of the more notorious

MARY DAVIS

To face page 182.

rakes I shall be dealing with them in another book; but as it happened that many of these were also notable in more respectable (if poetry can be called respectable—many people seem to think it in itself a form of decadence) walks of life, I shall here but adumbrate them, leaving their careers for fuller treatment in a succeeding volume.

When one comes to think of it, the Court of Charles II was in many respects the most remarkable court we have ever had in this country. Remarkable in that wit and good looks were at once a recommendation to it; remarkable in that so many of those whose rakish and libertine habits might have placed them outside the consideration of decent people have taken their places among the constellation of poets for which our Literature is so famous. They were not planets, but they were stars of wonderful power and brilliancy; and the names of Rochester, Sedley, Etheredge, Buckingham, Roscommon, Wycherley and the rest shine out as those of masters of certain lyric and dramatic qualities which sing in our hearts like birds, and which have caused the world to forget the shortcomings in the lives, and often in the verse and the plays (indecent and often unquotable as they are), of these gay and irresponsible songsters.

The Court of Charles II was composed of beauty and wit, and of little else. The former

was represented by those fair ones at whose personalities we have already glanced; the latter comprised such men as John Wilmot Earl of Rochester, George Villiers Duke of Buckingham, Charles Sackville Earl of Dorset, poets like Sir Charles Sedley and Sir George Etheredge, and such "general utility" men as Thomas Killigrew, William Chiffinch, and Edward Progers, whose duties were often of so confidential a character as to differ very little from the type of pander which is not peculiar to Charles's Court and which is as old as the desires it serves.

Among the general company, so to term it, might have been seen the handsome and graceful figure of Grammont; the tall, impending form of Dick Talbot; the large head and diminutive body of Henry Jermyn; Brouncker, whose libertinism was notorious even among that assembly of libertines; and Thomas Thynne, the "Tom of Ten Thousand," and the "Issachar" of Dryden's famous satire. The graceful form of the young Duke of Monmouth and the childish ones of some of the other children of the King, mingled, before the end, with the provocative glances of the Maids of Honour and the *airs vainqueurs* of the men of wit and fashion; and together with singing boys, the toy dogs of Charles and the monkeys and other pets of his mistresses, made up a *scenario* in which such grave counsellors as Clarendon and Southampton were to find them-

selves sadly out of place—a *scenario* which excited scorn in Evelyn and curiosity in Pepys, and which was interesting to men like Arlington and Clifford and Lauderdale, inasmuch as its attractions permitted their political intrigues to be unencumbered by the royal interference.

It is impossible to think of George Villiers second Duke of Buckingham without recalling the famous passage in which Dryden has drawn his character. It is too hackneyed to quote, but in those twenty immortal lines the whole nature of the man is portrayed by a master hand. We have already had a glimpse of him flying with Charles from the fateful field of Worcester, and of his subsequent adventures, among which his performance as a mountebank in the streets of London figures ; it is sufficient to say that having escaped to France he subsequently returned secretly to London, where erstwhile he had amused the citizens by reciting verses of his own composing, attired in antic garments, and wooed and won (with her father's consent) the daughter of Lord Fairfax the Parliamentary general. It was indeed a *coup de maître*, a fitting sequel to his former dare-devil escapades. Cromwell was furious, not so much because of an alliance between the daughter of his henchman with one of Charles's friends and counsellors, as because he is said to have marked down the young Duke for one of his own offspring. Buckingham was sent to the

Tower, and a violent quarrel between Fairfax and Cromwell over the matter was the result. However, the Protector was not to be moved, and the prisoner remained closely guarded until Richard Cromwell weakly attempted to wield a sceptre that required a far firmer hand. Then only could the Duke obtain permission to change the confinement of the Tower for that of Windsor.

With the Restoration, Buckingham received all sorts of proofs of the royal confidence, and he repaid the King by adding to his Court the graceful presence and witty tongue, the many accomplishments and the accommodating habits, for which he was renowned above most of his contemporaries. Reresby thought him the finest gentleman he ever saw; even the critical Grammont allowed that he was extremely handsome; and Madame Dunois has told us that he "was born for gallantry and magnificence, in both of which he surpassed all the lords of the English Court."

It might appear surprising that a man whose mental capacity was so much above the average, who could write so remarkable a play as *The Rehearsal*, who could indite such lyrics—often, to be sure, indecent—as have survived, should have been content to waste so many precious hours in mere frolic and buffoonery, did we not know that his "various" characters, so ably sketched by Dryden, were part and parcel of the

man and no mere pose. He laughed at everything, he ridiculed everything, and when he mimicked the solemnity of Clarendon or the bashfulness of a young preacher in the Royal Chapel he was so clever and irresistible that both King and courtiers shook their sides a-laughing. His thousand and one caprices led him into all sorts of scrapes and difficulties, and he turned from building to chemistry, from writing plays and poems to playing the fool or the fiddle, with a facility which showed powers worthy of a better employment. Nothing came amiss to him and only on one occasion does he seem to have embarked on an undertaking which he was ready enough to find an excuse for getting out of before it had materialised.* He was constantly identifying himself with matters which he did not understand and which he took up as he took up philosophy or politics, building or buffoonery, for the sake of variety, egged on by some demon that would not let him rest. Conspiracy was one of his later hobbies, and a proclamation was issued for his arrest. He quarrelled with Lord Ossory; he tore Lord Dorchester's periwig nearly off that solemn peer's head in the House of Lords itself, as recorded by a scandalised Pepys; he seduced Lady Shrewsbury and killed her husband in the famous duel

* I refer to his applying for the command of a ship during the Dutch war. As he had no experience in seamanship his rapid withdrawal, due to other causes than a sense of his own incompetence, was lucky—for the country.

of which, according to the story, his paramour was a witness, dressed as a page and holding her lover's horse; it is even said that he slept with the lady that very night in the shirt still stained with the blood of the encounter! On the death of Charles, Buckingham retired from Court, loaded with debts which are reported to have amounted to £140,000, and finally he himself died, worn out by dissipation, "between two common girls at a little ale-house in Yorkshire," * the "worst inn's worst room" of Pope's famous lines.

To such a man as Buckingham, John Wilmot Earl of Rochester was a worthy companion. A sensualist of the worst type—women and wine were his twin goddesses—full of classic lore which he had picked up at Wadham College, he was rather influenced by the pages of Petronius and Aristophanes than by those of Cicero and Æschylus, and his sensuality was often of that indecent character which we associate with the days of decadent Rome. Like so many of Charles's courtiers he was compact of contradictions: he was a Master of Arts and a wit; he could exhibit reckless gallantry, as he did when with the fleet at the attack on Bergen; he was guilty of the greatest poltroonery, as in his conduct in the quarrel with Lord Mulgrave; he would appear

* Dean Lockier told this to Spence. See the latter's *Anecdotes*. The fact, however, appears to be that "He died in the best house in Kirkby Moorside, which neither is nor ever was an alehouse." (J. Gibson writing to Brian Fairfax, 27 Feb., 1706/7.)

in all the glory of fine raiment at Whitehall, and anon would be found perambulating the streets dressed as a beggar and partaking of the feasts of citizens east of Temple Bar under other disguises. He pursued his amours indifferently with the facile beauties of Whitehall and St. James's, and would carry on the lowest intrigues with the lowest prostitutes of the streets. He would say openly the most daring things to his royal master, and would by means of spies find out the surreptitious amours of the Court and retire to his chamber and pen indecent strictures on their perpetrators. To him are ascribed some of the most filthy poems in the English language, and he wrote one or two of the loveliest lyrics and penned those lines *On Nothing* which even Addison has termed " an admirable poem."

Such a man was well fitted to shine in such a Court as that of Charles II, where facility and wit and what then passed for good breeding (and so often was) were far better recommendations than decency of behaviour and rectitude of conduct. Pepys calls Rochester " an idle rogue " ; Evelyn, better recognising the two sides of his character, more accurately describes him as " a very profane wit " ; and if, as Hume remarks, his very name is offensive to modest ears, one cannot but agree with the verdict of the philosopher historian that his poetry discovers such energy of style and such poignancy as to give ground for speculating what

so fine a genius, had he fallen on a more happy age and had followed better models, was capable of producing. At times he would live temperately, at others he would give himself up to the wildest excesses—excesses that ruined his health and eventually killed him at an age (he was but thirty-three) when many notorious libertines have not thought of reformation and some have hardly begun their career of loose living. At least, unlike many, Rochester did not die unrepentant, and Burnet's famous book in which the story of his end is told—a book of which Johnson once said that "the critic ought to read it for its elegance, the philosopher for its arguments, and the saint for its piety"—remains a proof that Rochester under less severe temptations might have come down to us as a poet charming without indecency, and a wit irresistible without immodesty.

Some of Rochester's pranks (to call them by no harder name) are famous: his boxing Tom Killigrew's ears in the King's presence, his lampoons on Majesty itself, and the rest. Wine was responsible for many of these lapses, a disordered imagination (let us call it the result of wine acting on a too curious classical knowledge) for some, a reckless daring ready to amuse or shock in turn, for more. When all is said, Rochester remains the outstanding type of the rake, who lived for the moment and who took the poet's *carpe diem* for his motto without remembering the same poet's *pallida mors*.

It is remarkable what a turn these rakes of the period had for literary expression. Poetry was in the air of Whitehall, and it is, I believe, this fact which gives to the Court of Charles II its distinctive character. Loose, sensual, materialistic it undoubtedly was; but there was among many of the courtiers a substratum of lyricism which differentiated it from the essential grossness of that of Louis XIV and the heavy, rather bucolic atmosphere of that of the Regent. Pictorial art and a superficial refinement of manners has, however, to some extent thrown a halo over the era of the former; and in the same way a love of letters (light letters, no doubt) has helped to blind us to the real character of the Merry Monarch's *entourage*. Buckingham wrote poetry; Rochester was, within limits, a great poet; and judged by one or two examples so was Charles Sackville Earl of Dorset—but he was more.

"I know not how it is," once exclaimed Rochester, "but my Lord Dorset can do anything and yet is never to blame." The fact is that Dorset's fame as a man of brilliant parts, of sound principles, of singular intelligence and generosity, has outlived his earlier reputation. Walpole calls him "the finest gentleman of the voluptuous Court of Charles the Second," and adds that "he had as much wit as his master or his contemporaries Buckingham and Rochester, without the royal want of feeling, the duke's want of principles,

or the earl's want of thought" ; while a line of Rochester's asserting that he was "The best good man, with the worst-natured muse," is confirmed by a passage from Burnet, who says: "Never was so much ill-nature in a pen as in his, joined with so much good nature as was in himself, even to excess."

We have before met with Lord Dorset, then Lord Buckhurst, as the protector for a time of Nell Gwynn. Indeed, the years of his hot youth were anything but creditable. He was mixed up in a rather mysterious circumstance resulting in the killing of a man named Hoppy, and for this he was with others committed to Newgate. Heath, in his *Chronicle*, mentions the affair, an affair that resulted in a bill for manslaughter (many thought it should have been murder) against the whole unruly band; but as, on their subsequent trial, they were acquitted, one must believe their own statements that it was done in error. Pepys was not the only one who had his doubts.

Buckhurst, as he then was, was also implicated with Sedley and Ogle in that disgraceful debauch at the Cock Tavern, Bow Street, when drunk to blindness—at least that is the most charitable construction to be put on the episode—the three young fools exposed themselves in a state of nudity, to the scandalized and curious citizens. Sedley seems to have been the ringleader in this indecent frolic, and perhaps its effects (for the

party was tried before Sir Robert Hyde, then Chief Justice of the Common Pleas) were of a sobering nature on Buckhurst. Anyhow, we do not hear of any other similar exploits on his part. Indeed, he became to some extent *rangé*, and although always a favourite companion of Charles, and mixing much with his free and easy courtiers, he appears to have given himself as much to literature and the patronage of its votaries as to the *petits soupers* of Whitehall. As the friend of Wycherley and Dryden, Butler and Rymer, he comes down to us illustrated to some extent by their fame. He also achieved fame on his own account, and his celebrated lyric, *To all you ladies now on land* represents one of the high-water marks of that light, easy, graceful verse which makes the Caroline age of poetry at once so characteristic and so appealing. This particular lyric is free, too, from that libertinism which mars so much of the verse of the day and which is found in the achievements of such men as Sedley and Etheredge—both courtiers, both wits, both poets—the latter in addition a dramatist in whose *Man of Mode* some of the personalities of the Court are adumbrated. The characters of these two men were very similar to those of others who amused the King and Court and scandalised the more deep-thinking and sober of their contemporaries. Women, wine, and gaming were part and parcel of their life, and when satiated

with such enjoyments they unbent their minds (like Mrs. Battle) over the production of a play or a set of verses.

The *chroniques scandaleuses* of the period teem with the names of men who added a decorative touch to the Court but who were for the most part worthless in character. One of these was the Harry Jermyn who figures so largely in the pages of Grammont's Memoirs, and who by means of an ample allowance from his uncle the Earl of St. Albans was able to make a figure at Whitehall from which his lack of wit and his ungainly shape would have seemed to debar him. He enjoyed the favour of Lady Castlemaine, for whom he sacrificed Mrs. Hyde with which enchantress he had had an intrigue; he also made advances to Lady Shrewsbury, less successful than ardent, although he seems to have found consolation with Miss Jennings, who, according to Anthony Hamilton's account, "thought she had never seen a man so perfect." He eventually married Miss Gibbs, "a silly country girl." His matrimonial hopes had once been much higher, for Pepys tells us how "it seems a daughter of the Duke of Lennox's was by force going to be married the other day at Somerset House to Harry Jermyn, but she got away and run to the King, and he says he will protect her"; while, earlier, according to the same authority, there was a report that he was actually united to the Princess

Royal, "which," adds the Diarist, "is worse than the Duke of York's marrying the Chancellor's daughter." Jermyn was one of those men who, like Wilkes, without outward attractions yet seem to be able to attract women. Nothing so scandalous attaches to his name as various incidents do to those of Buckingham and Rochester, but somehow one does not like him so much. He had no *redeeming* vices.

We have already had a glance at big, blustering lady-killing Dick Talbot, who seems to swagger his way through that Paphian atmosphere like some good-humoured giant, attracted by many butterflies, attracting more, losing his guineas to Grammont or his heart to Miss Jennings and Miss Hamilton, with equal facility and *nonchalance*.

A less agreeable person was Henry Brouncker, whose shameless libertinism has been recorded by Clarendon, and whose profligacy and impudence were only equalled by his skill at—of all games—chess. He seems to have been to the Duke of York what Chiffinch and Progers were to Charles—a pander. Pepys makes no bones about calling him "a pestilent rogue and atheist, and one that would have sold his King and country for sixpence almost, so corrupt and wicked was he, by all men's report." Even Grammont, accustomed as he was to a life where women were regarded as legitimate prey, records that Brouncker had the least regard for a woman's reputation of any, and he tells us

that " he had a little country house, four or five miles from London, always well stocked with girls," although, he adds, " in other respects he was a very good sort of man " !

I have incidentally referred to Chiffinch and Progers. These two worthies were appropriate adjuncts to such a Court as that of Charles II. With regard to the former, William, he is to be differentiated from his brother Thomas, quite a creditable person who looked after the Royal collections and who had himself in his house in St. James's Park, where Evelyn sometimes visited, a good gallery of pictures. He is described by Pepys as " the King's closet-keeper," but there seems no reason to suppose that he partook of those qualities which have made his brother notorious.

This brother was page of the bed-chamber, with such other duties as were connoted in those days by that office. From first to last he was one of the chief of Charles's confidential agents in his amours as well as in some of the more delicate of his political intrigues, and it was he who, according to Barillon, introduced the Catholic priest into the royal bedchamber when the King was dying. In the *Life* of the Lord Keeper Guilford by Roger North we are told that " this Mr. Chiffinch was a true secretary as well as page, for he had a lodging at the back stairs, which might have been properly termed the

spy-office, where the King spoke with particular persons about intrigues of all kinds; and all little informers, projectors, etc., were carried to Chiffinch's lodging." North further says that Chiffinch was "a most impetuous drinker, and in that capacity an admirable spy; for he let none part from him sober, if it were possible to get them drunk," Not only were the apartments of William Chiffinch the scene of Charles's confidential instructions and the meeting-place for those who helped to pander to his pleasures, but they also served as a convenient resort for the King when he had those parties *en petit comité*, of which only vague rumours reached the outer world and where, alternately with the gilded saloons of the reigning favourite or the more discreet rooms of Mr. Baptist May (another gentleman of somewhat the same kidney as Chiffinch), Charles was wont to foregather with shameless courtesans and equally shameless courtiers.

After the sudden death of Tom Chiffinch in 1666 William seems to have taken on, in addition to his more confidential duties, that of Keeper of the King's curiosities and pictures; and it is pleasant to turn from the assiduous pander to his sovereign's unregulated pleasures to the same gentleman in a more reputable *rôle* as indicated to us by Pepys, who on August 27th, 1667, tells how "Mr. Cheffins" (as he spells the name) "did take us of his own accord into the King's

closet to show us some pictures, which, indeed, is a very noble place, and exceeding great variety of brave pictures and the best hands . . . . Cheffins seemed to take pleasure to show us and commend the pictures." We may well leave him better employed in pointing out pictorial beauties to Pepys than in procuring painted beauties for Charles.

Edward Progers was a person of very similar character to Will Chiffinch. His name first occurs on the endorsement of a letter from Sir Edward Nicholas to Charles I, and the assumption is that he must have held some confidential although subordinate post in that monarch's household. Certain it is that he was about the person of Charles when Prince of Wales, and he was entrusted by Henrietta Maria with an important letter to her son's little Court in the Channel Isles, in which she advised his removal from Scilly. Neither Charles nor Henrietta could have foreseen the duties which their agent would afterwards come to perform for their son. Pepys knew Progers well, and makes various references to meeting him at various places, although he is not above bracketing him with those who, he and Alsopp the brewer agreed, combined to lead the King astray. So active had he been in this respect even while Charles was abroad that when he went to Scotland with his master in 1650 he was, by an Act of the Estates of that country,

banished from the royal presence "as an evil instrument and bad counsellor of the King." The Restoration, however, made it all right for him, and during Charles's reign he was as assiduous in furthering his master's *menus plaisirs* as was Will Chiffinch himself. Anything but child-like, he died notwithstanding, aged 96, "of the anguish of cutting teeth, he having cut four new teeth and had several ready to cut."* Evidently a case of a return of babyhood without a return of innocence!

* Le Neve.

CHAPTER X.

OLD ROWLEY HIMSELF.

THE sun around which the lesser constellations revolved was a being as remarkable in his character as he was distinctive in personal appearance and manner. At the time of the Restoration he was just thirty-one, and if the vicissitudes of his earlier life had left their mark on his character they seem to have otherwise passed over him without materially altering his easy ways or exacerbating his even temper. Perhaps no King was so accessible, and certainly few were more forbearing. He permitted things to be done and said to him which the most equable might have been forgiven for resenting. He was tolerant to the verge of weakness; he hated nothing (except perhaps a bore); he loved nothing (except perhaps a mistress, for a more or less limited period). He would yawn at a council meeting; he would shew the most unexpected interest in a dissection or a scientific experiment.

He could, as I have before noted, discuss philosophy with Hobbes and architecture with Wren and horticulture with Evelyn. But what he liked best was to saunter in his parks with a troop of courtiers and a troop of dogs, to both of which he gave about equal attention, and he threw the crumbs of his wit to his attendants with the same easy *nonchalance* as he threw the crumbs of bread to his water-fowl. He had seen so much diversity of human nature that it is probable that he believed neither in inherent honour in man or in woman. Without marked animosities and without marked preferences he went through a glittering existence undazzled—unless it was by the sort of meretricious beauty for which so many of his female favourites were famous. A merry life was what he ensued, and a merry life he led. There was about him that personal dignity peculiar to his family, and like his family he possessed the art of at once attracting devotion and preserving his friends, although, unlike his family, he not often forgot a kindness or was indifferent to any from whom he had received a benefit.

His good manners and his wit have become proverbial, and although the politeness and readiness of kings is often apocryphal, no one has questioned his right to be regarded not only as the sayer of innumerable good things himself but as the cause of innumerable good things in the mouths of others. Indeed his *bon mots* were as frequent

as Sheridan's and far more spontaneous; they possessed often the germs of philosophical reflections in as great a degree as did those of Sidney Smith; he was as allusive as Luttrell and far less bitter than Rogers.

Some of Charles's best sayings were collected by Cunningham when he wrote his amusing and interesting *Story of Nell Gwynn*. In addition to what is to be found there others are recorded, and as a King's words are his own (at least this King's were) while his deeds are frequently those of his ministers,* we shall gain no small insight into Charles's character from a study of his *obiter dicta*. One of his earliest good sayings was *à propos* of Lord Clarendon hesitating to accept a royal grant of 10,000 acres of land because of the envy he thought it would excite. "My Lord Chancellor," was the King's comment, "is a fool for all his wise head; does he not know that it is better to be envied than pitied?"

It is known that he was a great walker, often going at such a pace as to make it difficult for many of his courtiers to keep up with him, while the Duke of York was equally fond of horse exercise. It is on the authority of Anthony à Wood that we learn of a remark bearing on these

* This was the King's well-known retort to the famous lines of Rochester:—

"Here lies our Sovereign lord the King,
Whose word no man relies on;
He never said a foolish thing,
And never did a wise one."

characteristics made by Charles to Prince George of Denmark, who had just married the Princess Anne, daughter of the Duke of York, and who complained of growing fat: "Walk with me, hunt with my brother, and do justice to my niece, and you will not long be distressed by growing fat," was his advice.

His famous reply to the Duke of York himself is one of his best remembered sayings. As originally related by Dr. King, in his *Anecdotes of his own Times*, it appears that the King was walking up from St. James's Palace when he met the Duke of York in his carriage at Hyde Park Corner. Charles had but a couple of courtiers with him, whereas the Duke's equipage was surrounded by guards. Seeing his Majesty the Duke at once alighted, and having greeted his brother expressed his fear that some attempt might be made on him if he wandered about with so few attendants. "No kind of danger, James," replied Charles, "for no one will kill me to make you king."

On the other hand this easy nonchalance was not always observable in the royal demeanour, and an instance is on record in which the possibility of danger was obviously present in the King's mind. One day he was being shaved, when his barber was tactless enough to remark that he considered that none of his Majesty's *entourage* had a greater trust than he. "How so, my friend?" asked the King. "Why, Sir," replied the man,

"I could cut your Majesty's throat whenever I liked." Starting up, Charles exclaimed: "'Od's fish, the very thought is treason! You shall shave me no more."

Charles could convey a rebuke in such a way that the subject of it must indeed have been a churlish fellow if he could take offence. One of the well-known instances of this occurred when William Penn the Quaker had an audience with the King. Penn, after the manner of his sect, kept his hat on in the royal presence, whereupon Charles took off his. "Friend Charles," said the Quaker, "why dost thou not keep on thy hat?" "Why," replied the King, "'tis the custom in this place for only one person to remain covered at a time." Could a hint have been more courteously given or a rebuke more delicately administered?

On another occasion, Gregorio Leti, a voluminous Italian writer whose histories are rather picturesque than accurate, and who had been promised the post of historiographer to the English Court, was received by Charles. "Leti," said the King, "I hear that you are writing the history of the Court of England." "Yes, Sire, I am," replied the historian. "Take care then that it gives no offence," admonished Charles. "Sire," replied Leti, "I will do my best, but if a man was wise as Solomon he could hardly avoid giving offence." "Why, in that case,"

says the King, "be as wise as Solomon, write proverbs, not histories." Leti's *Teatro Britannico overo Historia della Grande Brettagne*, published in 1683, will shew the curious how far the historian profited by the wise counsel of the monarch.

Another example of Charles's witty way of retort—a way which often enough conveyed a criticism in a phrase, is afforded by the anecdote connected with Sir Christopher Wren. As is known, the architect was commissioned to design a palace at Winchester, a palace of which Mackay once wrote that when finished it would be the finest in England and inferior to few abroad.* It never was finished, but Charles took the greatest interest in its construction, and frequently went to Winchester to watch the progress of the work. On one of these occasions he complained to Wren, who was a short man, of the lowness of one of the rooms. "I think," replied the architect, "if it please your Majesty, it is high enough." On which Charles, squatting down to a level with Wren and thus creeping about, replied "Ay, I think now, Sir Christopher, it is high enough as you say."

One would give something to have that collection of the *bon mots* of Charles which Walpole said he had once compiled. Unfortunately it is lost, and the only example given in *Walpoliana*

* *Journey through England.* Walpole's criticism is the reverse of this.

(where Horace's remark is preserved) is that which was such a favourite with Horace that he introduces it into at least three of his letters. It was *à propos* of Wooley, afterwards Bishop of Clonfert, of whom Charles once observed, "That he was a very honest man but a very great blockhead—that he had given him a living in Suffolk swarming with nonconformists—that he had gone from house to house and brought them all to church—that he had made him a bishop for his diligence; but what he could have said to the nonconformists he could not imagine, except he believed *that his nonsense suited their nonsense.*"

Indeed, some of his best things were said of churchmen or to churchmen. One of the most famous is his reply to Stillingfleet. He had asked the Bishop how it was that when preaching before him he always read his sermons, but that, as he had heard, when preaching elsewhere he did so extemporaneously. Stillingfleet replied to the effect that the presence of so illustrious a prince and so noble a congregation was likely to strike awe into the preacher and might quite possibly cause him to lose the thread of his discourse. "But," continued he, "will your Majesty permit me to put a question to you? Why, when you can have no such reasons, do you always read your speeches to Parliament?" "Why, truly, doctor," replied the King, "your question is a very pertinent one and so shall be my answer.

I have asked the two Houses so often and for so much money that I am ashamed to look them in the face." His criticisms on the divines of the day indicate that curious knowledge of human nature, that eye for ability, that quick perception of mediocrity which Charles possessed in so eminent a degree. He was once so pleased with a passage in one of South's sermons that he turned to Rochester and exclaimed, " 'Od's fish ! Lory, your Chaplain must be made a Bishop, therefore put me in mind of him at the next vacancy." Barrow he called an unfair preacher because he so exhausted his subject as to leave nothing for others to say after him. It has been suggested that this remark may also have been a sly hit at the length as well as excellence of the Bishop's discourses.

Sometimes his wit took aphoristic* form, as when he once said (Pepys had it from his friend Pierce) that " he that takes one stone from the Church takes two from the Crown," and when he remarked to Burnet that he did not believe " God would damn a man for a little irregular pleasure" —a thought which was obviously father to the hope.

Once, when the Lord Keeper Guilford interceded with Charles for a person who, as North telling

* One thing Charles had not in common with so many of his courtiers—a love of swearing. Indeed we are told how on one occasion he reproved a gentleman for indulging in the habit. Hearne says *à propos :* " Tho' King Charles II was very amorous and much addicted to women (which was his chief failing and appeared most of all after his restauration), yet he was not guilty of swearing, but on the contrary would reprove such as used it."

the tale puts it, "was obnoxious," he exclaimed "most facetiously," "It is very strange that every one of my friends keeps a tame knave." Knaves seem, however, to have had a certain fascination for the King himself. One supposes that a readiness of wit which often characterises them appealed to that element in his own constitution. His leniency towards Colonel Blood, who tried to steal the Crown jewels, is a case in point, and the reply which Blood made to his Majesty when he interrogated him as to why he dared attempt so hazardous an enterprise must have been one after his own heart. "My father," said Blood, "lost a good estate fighting *for* the Crown, and I considered it no harm to recover it *by* the Crown." Charles might have forgiven him as he did for his readiness, but what reason made him bestow on the would-be thief an estate of £500 a year has never been explained.

Once Charles allowed himself to be made a party to a theft. The story was a favourite one with Richardson the painter, who has preserved it in his *Richardsoniana*. On one occasion a pick-pocket succeeded in getting into the Drawing Room on the King's birthday, and under the very eyes of the sovereign abstracted a gold snuff-box from one of the courtier's pockets. The thief, who saw that Charles had his eye upon him, put his finger to his nose and had the audacity to wink at the King as a sign that he should say nothing. Charles,

taking the hint, watched the courtier feeling in one pocket after another for the missing box, with the greatest amusement. Presently calling him he said : " You need not trouble yourself, my lord ; your box is gone. I am myself an accomplice— I couldn't help it, I was made a confidant."

There are innumerable other anecdotes shewing Charles's easy familiarity and wit. One of those given in the *Personal History* is well known but may be new to some readers. It was the custom for the King to dine with the Lord Mayor on Lord Mayor's Day, and when Sir Robert Vyner occupied the office Charles was more than once his guest at the Guildhall. Sir Robert was a loyalist to the core and was anything but averse from good cheer. On the occasion in question he drank so amply that he became unduly familiar with his royal guest. The King, perceiving that it was time to put an end to the matter, made a sign to his attendants, and watching his opportunity stole away unattended to his coach. Suddenly the Lord Mayor realised what had happened, and staggering after his royal guest caught him by the hand and swore that he should return " and take t'other bottle." Charles, looking kindly at him over his shoulder, with a smile and a graceful air, repeated this line of the old song : ' He that's drunk is as great as a King,' and immediately turned back and took " t'other bottle."

Steele, who tells the story in No. 462 of *The Spectator*, shall also give us his character of the King in his lighter moments: "This prince," he writes, "was by nature extremely familiar, of a very easy access, and much delighted to see and be seen, and this happy temper, which in the highest degree gratified his people's vanity, did him more service with his loving subjects than all his other virtues, tho' it must be confessed he had many. He delighted, though a mighty King, to give and take a jest, as they say; and a Prince of this fortunate disposition who were inclined to make an ill use of his power, may have anything of his people, be it never so much to their prejudice. But this good King made generally a very innocent use, as to the public, of this ensnaring temper; for 'tis well known he pursued pleasure more than ambition. He seemed to glory in being the first man at cock-matches, horse-races, balls and plays; he appeared highly delighted on these occasions, and never failed to warm and gladden the heart of every spectator."

This familiarity and accessibility seldom seem to have done any harm, indeed they kept Charles a place in the hearts of the people; and when that people was groaning under shameful political intrigues, or being made the victim of equally shameful extortions, it regarded the unpopular royal actions as due to his ministers, and all the easy tolerance, charming manners and witty talk

as being his own—thus confirming his own view of the matter. An example of this good-natured tolerance is afforded by the anecdote which tells how one day Miss Holford, who, it is only fair to say, was much admired by Charles, was in her apartments at Whitehall singing a then popular ballad called "Old Rowley the King," when the monarch happened to pass and knocked at her door. "Who's there?" she asked. "Old Rowley himself, madam," was the reply!

I take this opportunity of saying a word* about this famous nickname. There are two versions as to the cause of its origin: one of these is given in the *Richardsoniana* from which I have before quoted. "There was," it is said, "an old goat that used to run about the Privy-garden, to which they had given this name, a rank lecherous devil that everybody knew and used to stroke, because he was good-humoured and familiar, and so they applied this name to Charles." On the other hand it has always been supposed to have been given the King because it was the name of a famous but ill-favoured stallion which was at that time kept in the royal mews. It is not very material as to whether the horse or the goat gave its name to Charles: what is interesting is the fact that so far from resenting the application the King was highly amused at it, and, as we have seen, was not above applying it to himself—at

* See also the footnote on page 97.

least when a charming young lady was in question.

If Charles was a wit himself he was also, as I have said, the cause of wit in others ; and some of his courtiers equalled their master in the felicity of their retorts and the humorous quality of their expressions. It was the Duke of Buckingham who so happily differentiated between the King and the Duke of York by once remarking that " Charles could have been a great King if he would, and that James would if he could." It was Rochester who wrote the famous quatrain and uttered the hardly less famous aside. It was Shaftesbury who, on Charles's saying that he believed he was the greatest rogue in England, replied, " Of a subject, Sir, I believe I am ; " and it was Lord Dorset who, being asked by the King on the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's birthday what the bells were ringing for and, on being told, adding to his question the further one as to " How it came to pass that her birthday was still kept while that of his father and grandfather were forgotten already," replied : " Because she being a woman chose men for her counsellors, and men when they reign usually choose women."

Most of us are familiar with Charles's personal appearance as a boy, as a young man, and later in life. He was very swarthy, having inherited this from his mother, and he had little or nothing of his father's sad, rather pathetic, expression,

as may be seen by the many portraits of him by Cooper, Vandyck, Wissing, Lely, and others. Riley once painted him, and during the progress of the work Charles asked the artist if the portrait was really like him. "Then, 'od's fish," he exclaimed, "I must be an ugly fellow"—a verdict that, according to Walpole, discouraged the painter a great deal more than it did his sitter. The King's features were indeed large and heavy, and it must have been his expression, to say nothing of his position, which appealed to so many fair ones. His height was five feet ten inches, and with his severe even saturnine countenance and his dominating voice, as recorded by Evelyn, he must to strangers have appeared a rather formidable person. Lord Halifax, however, has pointed out what a striking exception he was to all the laws of physiognomy; for with an almost Mephistophelian cast of countenance he was by nature one of the merriest, most merciful and easy-going of men. The same critic has summed up Charles's chief characteristic as *unthinkingness*—an attribute which Rochester has preserved in a line in which he speaks of "Unthinking Charles."

On occasions, as we have seen, he could undergo hardship, preserve an unruffled mien amid adverse circumstances, take instant resolutions and act circumspectly; but his natural bent was towards ease and luxury. His abilities were such as to shew that had ambition been the predominant

factor in his composition, he might have proved as great a King as he was a lovable one. But business and the grave faces of counsellors were far less to his mind than the feeding of his ducks or the pretty faces of his court beauties. He preferred the wit of Rochester and Buckingham to the aphorisms of Halifax or the thoughtful enunciations of Clarendon.

His only convictions were those which taught him to enjoy life after his fashion. He was the supreme type of the sceptic—the very reverse of the fanatic, such as his father had been with regard to sovereignty and such as was his brother with regard to religion. In a word, he possessed all the characteristics that appeal to the imagination and hardly one which the judgment can commend. He was accessible to a remarkable degree and would spend hours talking with deep thinkers like Evelyn, or in chatting with all sorts and conditions of idle-pated people, and he would discuss scientific matters with the same ease and no little of the same knowledge as he would discuss the merits of a lady's charms or the points of a spaniel. He was unsuspicious and thus easily imposed upon, he was essentially light-natured, and thus often made hasty promises which he afterwards found it difficult, if not impossible, to keep. Amidst all his failings there was a strain of deep affection in his character underlying his assumed indifference, an affection he shewed for

many of his children,* an affection he exhibited for some of his mistresses and even for some of his less worthy courtiers. Unaffected by criticism he did and said things which were at once impolitic and injurious to his country ; but he did and said them with so easy and graceful an air that, as Burke once remarked of the vice of a later court, it lost half its meanness by losing all its grossness ; so Charles's manners and expressions took from much that he did and said no little of its sting and something of its meanness.

Of books he was as little a student as was an illustrious successor of our own day. But he was a reader of men ; and if he too often preferred the society of the worthless to that of the sagacious, it was because the former were amusing and the latter tedious. It may, in short, be said of Charles as it was said of a famous prince of the Orleans family, that at his birth the good fairies endowed him with all the gifts, but that through the malignancy of one he was destined never to make a proper use of any of them.

Dryden has summed up a part of his character in some well-known lines :—

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* The story is told by Hearne of how, once seeing his child by the Duchess of Cleveland, and who became Countess of Lichfield, crying because she had broken the window of the coach and feared her mother, " a very cruel and austere " one, says Hearne, would beat her, Charles sent a message to the Duchess to say that if she touched the child she would lose his favour and protection, and he gave her explicit instructions not to let anyone else chastise her.—*Reliquiae Hearnianae.*

"His conversation, wit, and parts,
His knowledge in the noblest useful arts,
Were such dead authors could not give.
. . . . . .
He drained from all, and all they knew,
His apprehension quick, his judgment true;
That the most learned with shame confess
His knowledge more, his reading only less."

Lines which are confirmed by what Sir Richard Bulstrode once said of Charles: "If this King had but loved business as well as he understood it, he would have been the greatest prince in Europe."

The annals of the Court of Charles II have been recorded for us by a variety of observers. Burnet and Clarendon, Madame Dunois and Evelyn and Pepys and many more, have thrown flashlights on to that vicious, gay, irresponsible society which made Whitehall and St. James's stink in the nostrils of the grave, and which alienated more than one of the cavaliers who had been ready to lose their fortunes, and what they held dearer, in the cause of the Crown. As it presents itself to us through the medium of contemporary observers it seems to have been not a little like the Court of Comus, where Mirth ruled supreme, and where everything was given up to liberty and pleasure. We have seen something of what the men and women were like who congregated around the Merry Monarch; Grammont's *Memoirs* shew us an unending panorama of vice and intrigue; few who entered those precincts pre-

served what the world calls their good name but what in that hotbed of iniquity was regarded as mere affectation. Corruption was rampant, and under the guise of good manners—a guise that was too often set aside—moral obliquity was the hall-mark of nearly everyone who circled about the Lord's Anointed. To compass the ruin of some unsophisticated maid of honour, to intrigue for the divided favours of the highly-placed courtesans, to gamble away their fortunes or to win those of others, to laugh at everything that one is taught to respect, and to make a jest of virtue were the daily occupations, the serious interests, of the majority of the courtiers. To give themselves to the highest buyer, to emulate and surpass the wretched denizens of the Seven Dials or Whitefriars in vice and extortion, to wrangle among themselves or to spy on each other's actions, to dissolve into tears or to work themselves up into passion for the sole purpose of achieving some conquest or for obtaining some favour, seem to have been a large portion of the daily existence of the fair and frail ladies who came or were enticed to the Court for one special object.

A study of the period leaves us wondering how such a state of things could have been tolerated by the people, who saw their money being emptied into the lap of one courtesan and the honour of their country being bartered away through the

machinations and wiles of another. At the same time this study confirms one thing, and that is that in spite of many failings, in spite of amatory excesses, in spite of a reprehensible *laisser aller* policy, the King himself was a far less corrupt man then the majority of those who surrounded him. Often while he sauntered about with his dogs or talked and talked about all sorts of things, or watched an experiment, or personally superintended a dissection, his courtiers were gambling away huge sums, or were employed in even less creditable ways. The Court beauties received at their toilettes the gay crowd of men who watched while the hair was being contrived into all sorts of wonderful convolutions of curls or the paint applied to the cheeks, "formerly," says Evelyn, "a most ignominious thing and used only by prostitutes," what time they made jests of everything in heaven above and on the earth beneath, told indecent stories or whispered more indecent suggestions. These "ladies of pleasure and curses of our nation," as the Diarist elsewhere terms them, were highly amused at "the sorry talk and discourse among the great courtiers, without any reverence in the world, but with much disorder," to use Pepys's words, and as often as not contributed their share to it.

Nor were such things confined to the private apartments of the palace. The public rooms, which appear to have been open to many not

exactly in Court circles, were the scene of the most open profligacy and abandonment. The easy-going King was there surrounded by the favoured courtiers, Rochester and Buckingham and Dorset and the rest; there he bandied witticisms with them or his mistresses; there he played with his famous breed of dogs (whom he allowed to litter in his very bedchamber); there he listened to the singing of the Italian boy in vogue, or perhaps took a hand (although he was not apparently a great gamester) at basset. There the Duchess of Cleveland, bold and brazen, would be seen flirting in Charles's very sight with one of that band of favoured admirers who shared her good graces with the King; there the Duchess of Portsmouth would play at blind-man's buff and overturn the furniture and break the china in her gyrations, or fondle a doll or build card castles with the skilful aid of Buckingham, or dream of sharing the throne after the Queen's death. The Duchess of Mazarine was there too, boring Charles with her perpetual politics but ravishing him with her wonderful eyes and *espiègle* ways; and there Nell Gwynn would do and say audacious things, and in her pert, ready way bandy wit with the great lords, or more than hold her own with the other notorious ladies.

The gambling that went on at Whitehall was amazing. Evelyn tells us how he saw "vast heapes of gold squander'd away in a vaine and

unprofitable manner," which he adds "I looked on as a horrid vice and unsuitable a Christian Court." Nor was the grave Diarist the only one to reprehend this extravagance. Others have noted the luxury and disorderliness of the Court, but from different standpoints. Thus in Grammont's *Memoirs* one gets, so to speak, the *couleur de rose* aspect, the point of view of one in it and of it, of one to whom the enjoyment so pleasing to his nature was added to by the interest—almost, one may say, the philosophical interest—he took in noting the doings of a strange environment. In Pepys's diary one obtains the impressions of a man with one foot, as it were, in the royal circle and the other in Seething Lane; of one who realises how wrong it all is but who cannot for the life of him quite help sympathising and perhaps envying the life of these gay butterflies. When Pepys has been present at some great function he records it with such a gusto that one feels he really must have enjoyed all the glitter and meretricious charm of the thing; when he has been discussing these goings-on with friends far from the Court's attraction he is as philosophical as Hobbes and as critical as Evelyn. Here is an example of his former attitude. It is an entry in the diary for November 15th, 1666:—

"To Mrs. Pierces, where I find her as fine as possible, and Mr. Pierce going to the ball at night at Court, it being the Queen's birth-day,

C. Turner sculpt.

CHARLES STUART DUTCHESS OF RICHMOND ob. 1702.

from an Original Painting by

Sr. Peter Lely

London: Publisshed by S. Woodburn 1810.

I also to the ball, and with much ado got up to the loft, where with much trouble I could see very well. Anon the house grew full, and the candles light, and the King and Queen and all the ladies sat, and it was indeed a glorious sight to see Mrs. Stewart in black and white lace and her head and shoulders dressed with diamonds, and the like many great ladies more, only the Queen none; and the King in his rich vest of some rich silk and silver trimming, as the Duke of York and all the dancers were, some of cloth of silver and others of other sorts, exceeding rich. Presently after the King was come in he took the Queen, and about fourteen more couple there was, and begun the Bransles . . . . After the Bransles then to a Corant, and now and then a French dance, but that so rare that the Corants grew tiresome, that I wished it done. Only Mrs. Stewart danced mighty finely, and many French dances, specially one the King called the New Dance, which was very pretty; but upon the whole matter the business of the dancing itself was not extraordinary pleasing. But the clothes and sight of the persons were indeed very pleasing, and worth my coming, being never likely to see more gallantry while I live, if I should come twenty times. About twelve at night it broke up."

At such a ball as Pepys has described the proprieties were no doubt more or less adhered to. The presence of the Queen was sufficient to

ensure so much, although that august but rather colourless lady had to put up at least with the presence of her illegal rivals in the King's affections. But there were many Court functions at which restraint was conspicuous by its absence, and in the less discreet annals of the period we get glimpses of scenes which recall the atmosphere of a Turkish seraglio or the orgies of Rome under Domitian or Caligula, rather than that of the *vie intime* of the ruler of a Christian and civilized society. In the private apartments of the various mistresses all sorts of strange happenings took place, and something of the character of the many intrigues and love-passages that occurred constantly, nay daily and nightly, may be gathered from the pages of Grammont and read between the lines in innumerable other contemporary chronicles. Andrew Marvell, in one of his many lampoons, in this case entitled *Ballad on the Lord Mayor and Aldermen*, refers to Charles when he says :—

> "And when he was beat,
> He still made his retreat
> To his Clevelands, his Nells, and his Carwells;"

and there is no doubt that in the company of these fair ladies, and of how many more even contemporary curiosity is silent, Charles found his greatest pleasure and his constant solace.

It is a well-known subject for wonder what would happen if walls could speak. When the

disastrous fire occurred which destroyed Whitehall in the days of William the Third it obliterated the scene of this profligacy and of so many wasted hours; and as in the case of Babylon the flames licked up all the inanimate witnesses of a decadence which is without parallel in the annals of our country. For twenty-five years it went on to the delight of many, the scandal of some, the wonder and amazement of more. Had Charles been a fool and had he attempted to combine a life of pleasure with the arbitrary instincts of his father or the pedantic buffoonery of his grandfather, there is little doubt that the people would have thrown off his yoke, as they had done that of Charles I and were to do that of James II. But beneath his airy genial ways he was exceedingly cautious and calculating. As he once said, he had no wish to do any more travelling; and although he was not above scandalizing the nation, he took good care never to try its temper too severely. Nor did he in any case wish to. He was an essentially good-natured man and one who liked to see people happy. Those he saw daily were the members of his Court, and there is no question but that he did contrive to keep them happy by permitting unbridled licence, and by treating everything with a sort of amused and cynical tolerance.

To those in the outer circles he appeared the pleasant, hail-fellow-well-met ruler whose condescension was so unstudied that it seemed (and

really was) natural, whose easy familiarity never degenerated into heavy patronage, who at least in his manners was as perfect a gentleman as Louis Quatorze, without that effulgent personage's almost oppressive dignity. One knows how the French monarch once sat down to supper with Molière. The scene is a most edifying one, but the King wished, one remembers, to give a lesson in humility to his great courtiers. The whole thing smacks a little too much of a theatrical display, and one cannot imagine Jean Poquelin happy or easy under the ordeal. When Charles, on the other hand, talked with Hobbes or Evelyn, one sees him doing it with the natural ease of a man used to all sorts of society and thus putting at their ease those whom he pleased as well as honoured. Once, it is known, he suggested the subject of a poem to Dryden. "If I were a poet," he said—and he interpolated, "I'm sure I'm poor enough to be one,"—"I should write such and such a thing." The touch is there—the wit—the good breeding. With a phrase he puts Dryden and himself on an equality, honouring himself by an implied comparison with a man of genius, honouring the man by an implied status which only posterity has the power of conferring.

Those happy, heedless, kingly days lasted, as I have said, for just a quarter of a century. The end was tragically sudden. Evelyn, in perhaps the most famous, certainly the best known,

passage he ever penned, has left us a picture of that brilliant Court. It occurs in the entry in his Diary for February 4th, 1685, in which he details the King's death on that "sad and not joyfull day." "I can never forget," he adds, "the inexpressible luxury and prophaneness, gaming, and all dissoluteness, and as it were total forgetfullnesse of God (it being Sunday evening) which this day se'nnight I was witnesse of; the King sitting and toying with his concubines, Portsmouth, Cleveland, and Mazarine, &c.; a French boy singing love songs in that glorious gallery, whilst about 20 of the greate courtiers and other dissolute persons were at basset round a large table, a bank of at least 2000 in gold before them, upon which two gentlemen who were with me made reflexions with astonishment. Six days after all was in the dust!"

The beginning of the end came, as we all know, while the King was dressing. The details, extraordinarily full and circumstantial, have been recorded by such reliable narrators as Roger North and Burnet and Evelyn; while a long letter from Dr. Turner, Bishop of Ely, to the Rev. Francis Roper, first printed by Sir Henry Ellis, gives a vivid account of the last scene from the hand of an eye-witness. This is not the place to linger over the dying moments of a man who, if he lived ill, at least faced death with firmness and constancy; nor is it necessary to recapitulate

the vexed question as to whether or no he died in the faith of the Roman Church, or as to whether, as some believed and actually stated, he died of poison. That he died believing something should be enough for us. Even when the pangs of his last agony were upon him his habitual good manners were predominant. He had asked for the Queen directly he recovered from the first fit, and she was present with him until the pain he was suffering so overcame her that she was obliged to be carried away. Later she sent Charles a message begging him to excuse her presence. "Alas! poor woman!" he exclaimed, "she beg my pardon! I beg hers with all my heart." He recommended his children to the care of his brother, and he apologised to the watchers for being so unconscionable a time dying, a last flicker of that abundant wit and good humour which had carried him for a quarter of a century safely through so many shoals and dangers and which had proved his most attractive asset. His last words were a request to James that he would be kind to the Duchesses of Cleveland and Portsmouth, and that he would not let "poor Nelly starve."

With the extinguishing of that bright light all the lesser luminaries went out. Whitehall, which had but so recently echoed to the careless laughter, the scintillating jest, the indecent story, or the profane mockery; where the rattle of gold

had punctuated the notes of the gay love-song; where the gambols of toy-dogs and the grimaces of Scaramouch had been reflected in a thousand mirrors; where the candle-grease had defiled priceless brocades and the over-running bumpers had inflamed already heated throats; where riot and disorder were as rampant as were lechery and infidelity—the Whitehall of a thousand stories and countless profane legends, was a place of mourning; all its thoughtless throng given for once to thought, all its indifferent inmates for once startled from their indifference, for once made to realise that the Horatian maxim by which they lived—the *carpe diem* of the poet, was to be matched by a yet more insistent because a more inevitable truth:—

Pallida mors equo pede pulsat
Pauperum tabernas Regumque turres.

All was, indeed, in the dust.

THE END.

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